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ABSTRACT

The three issues of the journal on second language teacher education include these articles: "Making a Course Your Own: Involving Trainees in the Planning and Evaluation of a Special Group Summer Course Abroad" (Klaus Lutz); "Task Based Learning - Appropriate Methodology?" (Jane Cadorath, Simon Harris); "Building Group Spirit in Teachers' Groups in Flux" (Rachel Bodle); "What's Your Mentoring Style?" (Ingrid Wisniewska); "A Teacher's Essay on Criticism" (Richard Watson Todd); "Pioneering EFL Teacher Training" (Brita Haycraft); "Using Graded Readers in the Classroom -Practical Considerations" (Derek Strange); "Are You Honest?" (Elizabeth Adams); "Helping Teachers To Reflect - An Application of NLP" (David Bowker); "Chaos Theory and the PDSA Cycle" (David King); "Grammar in MA TESOL Programs: A Redefinition" (Ardith Meier); "Fear and the Classroom" (Jenny Leonard); "Peace in the Gulf"; "The Good Teacher Trainer" (Simon Borg); "The Challenge Beyond the Teacher's Desk: Simulation and Role Play for Training Class Management" (Gabriella Grigoriou, Fabiola Popescu); "Diary Writing for Self-Reflection" (Ng Jueh Hiang); "Teachers Develop, Teachers Research TDTR3"; "What Is a Teacher? Changing Perceptions" (Jenny Pugsley); "Observation in the Round" (Katy Salisbury); "Constructing Pyramids: A 3-D Metaphor for Teacher Trainers" (Jeremy Parrott); "People Who Train People: Rachel Bodle"; "Reflecting on Training" (Bettinetti, B.; Monticolo, G.; Tropea, R.); "Redesigning the Language Awareness Component on Pre-Service TEFL Courses" (Andrew Foster, Paul Mercieca); "Interview with David Graddol of English 2000"; Wider Exposure to Classroom Reality" (Regina Lo); and "Action Plans for Ending a TT Course" (Monika Gedicke). Notes on publications and professional activities are also included in each issue. (MSE)

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The Teacher Trainer

A PRACTICAL JOURNAL MAINLY FOR MODERN LANGUAGE TEACHER TRAINERS

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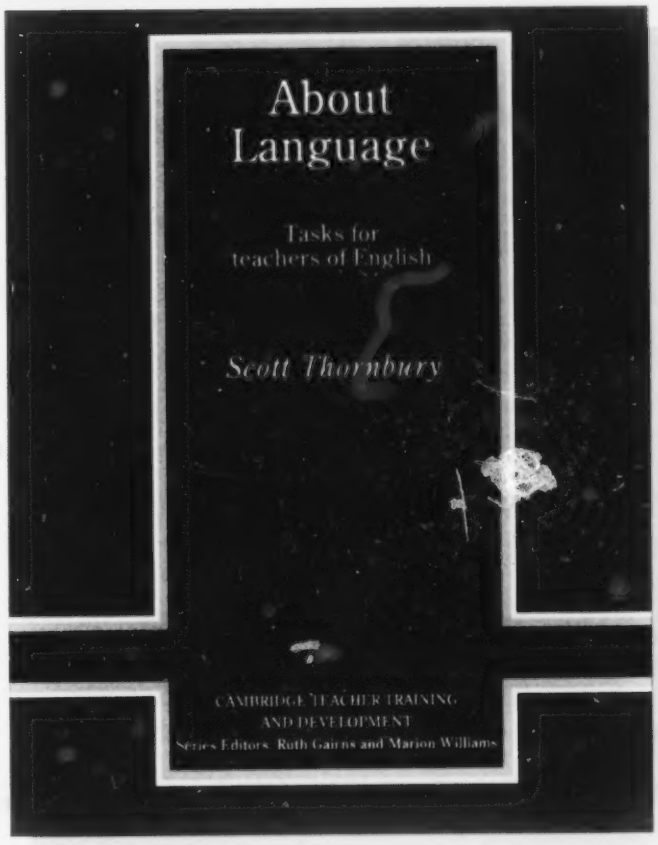
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ABOUT "THE TEACHER TRAINER"

"The Teacher Trainer" is a journal especially for those interested in modern language teacher training. Whether you are a teacher who tends to be asked questions by others in a staffroom, or a Director of Studies with a room of your own, whether you are a course tutor on an exam course, or an inspector going out to schools, this journal is for you. Our aims are to provide a forum for ideas, information and news, to put trainers in touch with each other and to give those involved in teacher training a feeling of how trainers in other fields operate as well as building up a pool of experience within modern language teacher training.

The journal comes out three times a year and makes use of a variety of formats e.g. article, letter, comment, quotation, cartoon, interview, spoof, haiku ideas. If the idea is good, we'll print it whatever voice you choose to express it in.

Editorial

Welcome to the start of Volume 12!

If you are taking a group of teachers abroad for a short course, or if you receive such groups around the year, the Klaus Lutz's article (p. 3) will be very useful for you. He details ways of making the course truly the teachers' own.

Jane Cadorath and Simon Harris (p. 6) wanted to include Task Based Learning in their pre-service course for non-native speakers in Mexico but felt it should be adapted to fit local teaching conditions. Their article shows how they managed this.

Rachel Bodle, our business consultant, is back (p. 9) with suggestions for over-coming a problem of a seasonal swell in staffroom numbers where existing staff feel invaded and newcomers feel like outsiders.

If you like quizzes where you tick answers, add them up, and find out what sort of person you are, look at Ingrid Wiesniewska's piece (p. 10) to find out more about your own mentoring style.

Literature buffs familiar with Pope's poetry will enjoy the playful adaptation of 'An Essay on Criticism' by Richard Watson Todd (p. 11).

Many readers will know that John Haycraft, who died in May 1996, started with his wife Brita the intensively practical, short, pre-service courses for EFL teachers that are now known as 'The Cert', 'The CTEFLA', 'The RSA', or more correctly, 'The UCLES/RSA CELTA'. In this issue Brita Haycraft tells the story of that adventure (p.12).

If you would like to work with teachers to get language students reading more, have a look at Derek Strange's article (p. 15) on graded readers and the why, what, which, where, and how of choosing and using them.

Sometimes students, especially in mass and rather passive situations, may feel unwilling to tell you how they really feel about your teaching or training. If you are in this situation, read Elizabeth Adams' idea for encouraging participants to be honest (p. 17).

We have had some definitions of Neuro-Linguistic Programming in past issues. In this issue, we have an interesting application of 'logical levels' to in-service teacher reflection. David Bowker (p. 19) walks us through the idea with verbatim quotes to make it really clear.

"There's many a slip 'twixt cup and lip" is the old fashioned way of explaining unpredictable happenings. Nowadays we have chaos theory! If you'd like to know more about it and how it and something called the PDSA Cycle can improve your work, look at David King's article (p. 22).

Our usual collection of swift, thumbnail sketches of the latest books is included in Publications Received (p. 25). The aim of this column to help you decide if you'd like to look further at a book or not and to bring to your attention books you might not otherwise hear about.

As usual this issue includes the well-known and the first-time published author, the immediately practical and the longer term more thought-provoking, the non-native and the native English speaker. I hope you enjoy it.

As you know, although we do not advertise our journal much, we are still growing. This is thanks to the interesting articles and the names and addresses of likely subscribers that you send in. We need them both so please keep them coming!

Thanks!

Tessa Woodward.

Editor

Making a Course Your Own

Involving trainees in the planning and evaluation of a Special Group Summer Course abroad
by Klaus Lutz, Austria

Introduction

Every summer thousands of EFL-teachers from all over the world decide to invest time and money in their personal and professional development by attending one of the numerous courses offered by teacher-training institutions all over the UK. As a rule, individual teachers choose a course that looks attractive to them, make their own travel arrangements and hope that the whole enterprise will meet their expectations.

In this article I want to describe an alternative approach. Last summer a group of Austrian EFL-trainees and myself, one of their tutors, decided to attend a course in Britain specially designed for their needs as students and future teachers of English[1]. The course was meant to be an integral part of a two-year study programme, ending with a written and oral certificate exam. The group consisted of ten people who, professionally speaking, had vital things in common: They were all practicing secondary school teachers of various subjects, studying for an extra qualification as teachers of English. At the time of the course they had almost finished their programme and were busy preparing for the final exam in the following autumn. Thus the function of the course in Britain was this: First of all it should give them further self-confidence as far as their command of the English language was concerned by offering lots and lots of opportunities to use it. Furthermore, it should contribute to their motivation as future teachers of English by confronting them with unconventional but highly efficient techniques and methods. Finally, the experience of living and working closely together for a week should help to further develop a positive group atmosphere of mutual caring and sharing, also in connection with the forthcoming exams.

Another main function was to implement the element of self-evaluation and self-reflection from the moment the group had decided to do a Special-Group-Course in the summer. The overall aim was to make it "their course" as much as possible. My task as one of their tutors in Austria and the organiser of the trip to England was twofold: I had to find means of both triggering off this process of self-evaluation and of communicating its outcome to the ELT institution we had chosen.

Preparations for the course at home

I started off with a questionnaire to evaluate the trainees' confidence in using English as a means of communication and their personal judgement concerning their own proficiency with regard to the four skills and aspects such as pronunciation, vocabulary and grammar. In the second part they were invited to list topics of interest the tutor(s) in Britain ought to cover. In addition to that they were asked to finish the following sentence starters:

a) What I hope will happen in the course in Britain is that...

b) What I hope will not happen in the course is that...

Last but not least I asked them to think about my role during the course: Should I restrict myself to organising the week or did they expect me to do some tutoring or advising as well?

The analysis of the questionnaires showed that the trainees had very clear notions of their strengths and weaknesses. They were, for example, worried about their level of oral accuracy and found they needed more practice in the field of detailed listening. Consequently they had clear conceptions of the course itself and of what they thought should/should not happen there. They expected my role to be that of a tutor and advisor and not simply that of an organiser.

My next task was to pass the data on to the ELT-institution in England, respectively to the main tutor the institution had chosen for our course. I felt this was a tricky business that asked for sensitive mediation between the needs of the group on the one hand and the respect for the individual tutor on the other, who wishes to bring in her own ideas as much as possible. I chose the personal form of a letter to the tutor in Britain in which I informed her of the results of the self-evaluation questionnaire (group profile). Furthermore, I did not leave her in any doubt as far as my role was concerned: I would not attend any of her sessions and my work would not interfere with hers in any way.

The second type of information the tutor in Britain received was an audio tape that was produced in one of the conversation classes. All the participants introduced themselves briefly and talked about their expectations. The idea was to offer the tutor information (their aims as well as their language competence) that was truly

continued ►

1 In our case we chose Pilgrims at Canterbury. There are, however, other ELT-institutions in Britain that offer tailor-made courses.

authentic and in no way filtered by my subjective perception.[2]

The course itself

On our arrival in Britain we were all given a personal letter from the tutor, in which she introduced herself and gave an outline of what she had planned for the week. She had carefully thought of taking our needs and wishes into consideration and at the same time bringing in her personal style and ideas as an experienced teacher trainer. This letter of welcome immediately eased some of the tension the trainees had felt and it made them anxious to meet the tutor personally and to start working with her.

As to my role: Three times during the week we had a one-hour "reflective meeting" in the evening. At the first and second meetings I asked the group members to browse through their notes and handouts again and to produce a short written text on one of the following topics:

- Something I have learnt today as a student of English/a future teacher of English
- Something I have discovered about myself as a learner/teacher
- An activity I'll try out myself
- Something I would like to investigate further
- A certain stage/moment during the day when I really felt involved/stunned/bewildered/bored/frustrated.

These "learning logs"[3] had the following functions: First of all they should stimulate individual reflection upon the learning experience of the day and by doing so give it a personal structure. This seems to me particularly important in an environment such as an international teacher training centre where so much is going on in the course of a day (group tutorials in the morning, optional workshops in the afternoon, talks and social programme in the evening, informal conversations with colleagues and new friends, etc). For participants who stay for only one week and who try to get out of the week as much as they possibly can this is of especially vital importance.

Secondly, the log-writing should contribute to the participants' awareness-raising process both as learners and as future teachers of English. The very act of writing may clarify certain ideas, experiences and feelings. After the individual writing activity the trainees were invited to share their thoughts, observations and comments either with a partner or with the whole group.

In the final evening session I confronted them with a list of the statements they had made in the initial questionnaire concerning their hopes and fears. Their task was to grade the statements from 1-10 in terms of "valid/not valid" now that the course was over. In addition to that, the participants were asked to pick out one statement, comment on it and again share their views.

Here are two examples of initial statements made in the questionnaire and of trainees' comments at this stage:

"I hope we will not talk too much German."

"I really hoped that we'll could stick to talking English this week. It is not so easy although I tried several times. However, especially when you want to talk about your own feelings and experiences it is very difficult to find the right words in a foreign language. (...)"

Even though we were a monolingual group we stuck to speaking and writing in English. I for my part addressed the group or individuals in English all the time. However, when members of the group were amongst themselves, the language they used was apparently a matter of considerable concern.

Other (critical) comments showed that these "house meetings" not only helped the trainees to raise their own awareness of their learning experience, but that they were/are also very important feedback for the trainers back home:

"I hope we will not do again what we have already done in the two-year course."

"I feel a little bit ambiguous about this statement. On the one hand I am really glad that this has not come true, but on the other hand (...) I have to criticise our two-year programme: I am very glad that I have attended the optional "pronunciation workshops" here, because this is basic knowledge that we have not heard much about in Austria. The same could be said about intonation."

Final evaluation of the summer course

In October and November the group took their certificate exams. They all passed, and some of them did very well. I was one of the examiners, and the fact that I had had the chance to spend a week in Britain with them had considerable influence on the atmosphere in the exam situation. Some days later I contacted the members of the group again, asking them for a final written feedback: What did they think was the impact of the summer course on their exam? How did they see the course three months later? Some participants had been given an English class to teach in September.

Here are some of their final comments:

"And now - a few months later - I think I learnt what I had expected to learn. I've got a lot of ideas and motivation to try new methods. I really appreciate the work of our tutors in Britain and I am still impressed by the way they taught us. I have already tried out some activities im my class. (...) I started the new school year with a lot of energy."

"I was -and still am - thrilled by the quality and variety of simple but very practical ideas which help me a lot in my lessons. (...)"

"In general I think that it was a successful week. Our intention in the first place was to improve our English, which actually happened. But I have got the feeling that the results would have been better (concerning fluency) if we had been a mixed

2 I owe this idea to Tessa Woodward, who suggested a recording when I worked with her on an international course in Britain a couple of months before.

3 Patricia A. Porter et al., An ongoing dialogue: learning logs for teacher preparation. In: Jack C. Richards and David Nunan: Second Language Teacher Education, Cambridge 1990, pp. 227-244.

language group. In this case you are compelled to talk in English all the time; otherwise it is easy to switch to your mother-tongue."

Conclusion

The main pedagogical rationale behind the approach described above was the following: Asking learners to self-evaluate their language competence fosters learner autonomy and increases learner motivation. If a course programme carefully tunes into learner needs, hopes and fears,. the participants experience that they are taken seriously not only as learners but also as human beings. This experience will be intensified if there is a tight link between training and reflecting. It remains to be seen whether trainees who have had this experience themselves will be ready to act in a similar way in their own classes.

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Ur, Penny 1997 *The English teacher as professional* in English Teaching professional Issue 2

Wallace, Michael 1991 *Training Foreign Language Teachers. A reflective approach* CUP

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SESSION PLAN

Task Based Learning- Appropriate Methodology?

by Jane Cadorath and Simon Harris, Universidad Autonoma de Yucatan, Mexico.

1 BACKGROUND

In an article in The Teacher Trainer (Preaching what we practice – Training what we teach, Vol.8. No.1 Spring 1994), Jane Willis discussed Task-Based Learning as an alternative to the PPP model (Presentation, Practice, Production). As Willis says, it seems wrong to focus our attentions on the PPP model, when there is doubt about its effectiveness and when most trainers, and many teachers, are unhappy with the rigid way in which this model is all too often applied.

As trainers on Cambridge COTE courses (Certificate for Overseas Teachers of English – pre-service teacher training courses for non-native speakers) we were keen to include Task-Based Learning in our syllabus but were also aware that, for many of our trainees, TBL would have to be adapted to fit local teaching conditions, and so presented in a 'revised' version. In this article we outline a training session we did on a COTE course, where we introduced the idea of TBL, but in a form we consider appropriate to the local context.

2 THE TRAINING CONTEXT

We are working in the South-East of Mexico, with teachers from university language centres or faculties. For the majority of these teachers the syllabus is the coursebook and all exams are based entirely on new language items in the book, predominantly structures and vocabulary. The result, almost inevitably, is that teachers are under pressure to cover each unit of the book in its entirety.

In a teaching situation, where certain language items, defined by the book (= syllabus) have to be taught within a certain period of time, there is little room for the more open-ended aims of a true task-based lesson, where the teacher deals with the type of language that the students have become aware that they need while doing the task. The reality is that teachers have certain language items to teach and they want a methodological model – or models – which will help them focus on these items.

For many of these teachers aspects of PPP are familiar – many of their coursebooks suggest a presentation/practice-based approach – but the terminology, the range of possible presentation techniques and the final 'P' – production – were new analytical concepts. Nevertheless, we did not feel that this justified ignoring alternatives and we decided, therefore, to introduce Task-Based Learning in the COTE programme, but in such a way that we were able to emphasise its similarities to PPP as well as highlighting some of its advantages over PPP. In this way we hoped to give trainees options to work with, and to make them aware of how easily they could adapt their lessons to make them more task-based.

3 WHAT IS TBL?

The TBL model we used was an adapted version of Willis' 6 stage cycle (Willis 1994):

INTRODUCTION: An introduction to both topic and task, where the teacher helps the students understand the objectives of the task and organises the collection of ideas or information about the topic.

TASK: Students work in pairs or groups using whatever language they can to express themselves. Teacher encourages but there is no correction. Emphasis is on fluency and getting things done – the purpose.

PLANNING: Students spend some time on putting together (in written or spoken form) a report on what they did and what they decided on. Teacher can help with language here, if required, with the emphasis on ability to communicate the results.

REPORTING: Teacher organises feedback, with the groups reporting to the class, either orally or in writing (e.g. on posters) their results. No overt correction.

LANGUAGE FOCUS AND PRACTICE: Teacher sets up a language focus task, which draws attention to one or more of the following:

a) language students could have used but didn't

b) language they used but not as well as they might have

c) any other language, related to the topic and task, that the teacher considers important and wishes to focus on

This stage could include drills, dialogues etc (typical activities from the Practice stage of PPP). In all cases, the aim is to focus students' attention on key language points.

PARALLEL TASK: Students have a chance to try out the task again, but this time with different materials, which will necessitate the same kinds of language.

4 THE TRAINING SESSION

We devised a training session which is essentially experiential in character and which illustrates how a TBL approach can focus on specific structures or functions. In a sense it is an upside-version of PPP (or, as Willis says, PPP the right-way up!) containing many of the same techniques but enabling learners to appreciate their own need for the language being taught.

SESSION PLAN

Aims: To understand the idea of a task and the basics of a task-based approach

To compare PPP with TBL

To guide teachers towards designing their own TBL lesson

Procedure:

Step 1: Trainees experience a Task-Based lesson as 'students'. For this we used the 'lesson' outlined in Figure 1.

Fig. 1

INVENTIONS (adapted from The Wonderful World of Inventions in Campbell and Kryszewska)

Level: Lower-intermediate and above

Time: 30-45 minutes

Language Area: Comparing past with present habits.

Procedure:

INTRODUCTION

1. Learners, in groups, write down three inventions that have occurred in their lifetime and which have profoundly affected modern life.
2. Each group writes on the board their list.
3. Select 1 invention at random and discuss, as whole class, what life was like before it was invented.

TASK (PLANNING)

5. Give each group one invention and ask them to write a paragraph (4/5 sentences) describing life before and since the introduction of the invention.

REPORTING

6. When the descriptions are ready, ask the group to stick their paragraph on the wall. Give the class the opportunity to go around, reading the different texts.

LANGUAGE FOCUS AND PRACTICE

7. Select sentences from students' writing and elicit or suggest alternative ways of expressing the same ideas. (For example, useful language points might include the use of 'used to/would' for past habits, the use of 'is/are/was/were able' as an alternative to 'can/could'.)

   If the class is small, and if a drill is required, learners could write the name of their invention on the blackboard, stand under it and make statements about what life used to be like before that particular invention, or what people weren't but are now able to do as a result,using the specific language item to be drilled e.g. 'used to/would' etc

8. PARALLEL ACTIVITY

Tell learners the following:

'It is now the year 2050. You must imagine one new invention that has occurred in the last 50 years. Write a brief paragraph describing how life has changed as a result of that invention. DON'T WRITE THE NAME OF THE INVENTION.

When you have finished your description, put it on the wall, and see if the other groups can guess what you have invented.'

9. Learners work in groups on a brief paragraph, stick it on the wall when complete and then try to guess the other inventions.

Step 2: When trainees have completed the task-based lesson, ask them to review the main stages. Trainees should come up with stages similar to the 6 stage cycle described above.

Step 3: Hand out jumbled plans for TB lessons. For this we used a selection of activities from Nolasco and Arthur (1987) and Campbell and Kryszewska (1994) and adapted them for TBL. (One example is given in Figure 2.) Trainees in their groups must reorganise them as they think best, bearing in mind the stages discussed in Step 2. Note that the Parallel Task is left for trainees to design.

Fig 2

JE NE REGRETTE RIEN

Step: Encourage them to share their thoughts in small groups of three or four.

Step: Look at area of regrets, wishes, using 'would' as in 'I would change' and 'I wish I could/had'

Step: Put the following list on the board:

- your school
- your job or occupation
- your habits e.g. smoking, exercise, eating etc
- your sex
- your hobbies
- your skills
- your appearance

Step: See if there are any areas that most of the class would want to change.

Step: (Devise a parallel activity to practise the language of regrets/wishes.)

Step: Students should take it in turns to tell the others in the group what they would change if they had their life again. The others can comment or question.

Step: Ask the students to write a personal entry for each heading i.e. the name of the school, their job etc. They should then decide which of these they would or would not change if they were to live their lives again.

Groups should stick their reordered lesson plans, with their suggestions for a parallel task, on a large piece of paper and put it on the wall. Trainees will then have the opportunity to move around the room, study each TB lesson and add their comments.

Step 4: Hand out selection of readings to each group – the readings we used were the following:

Harmer, J. (1991) *The Practice of English Language Teaching* pp 50/51

Hubbard, Jones, Thornton and Wheeler (1983) *A Training Course for TEFL* pp 249-253

Willis, J. *Preaching what we practise – Training what we teach* in The Teacher Trainer Vol.8 No.1 Spring 1994

Step 5: When trainees have finished reading they should compare PPP and TBL approaches to focussing on new language and decide on similarities and differences.

5 EVALUATION AND REACTION

In the comparison and discussion after the readings, the following points were raised: while stages of the lesson were recognisable, they were differently ordered; while techniques used were recognisable, they were more varied and not so tied to a particular stage; this was especially true of techniques for focusing on accuracy. In other words the trainees tended to view TBL not as an alternative model but as an alternative way of working with PPP. (At this stage, the discussion was based more on the 'methodology' i.e. the organisation by the teacher, than on the theories about language and learning implicit in the two models.)

In ensuing classroom observations the richer diet of options we had supplied (i.e. TBL, or variations thereof, as an alternative to the 'set menu' of PPP) proved difficult to digest for trainees, at least initially. But, in the longer term, teachers became more confident in linking together activities: there were more truly communicative activities because TBL sessions had given them a greater sense of how to structure them, and teachers were developing a more informed and varied approach as to where and how to introduce language work in the predominantly controlled practice activities in their classroom (a product of their own experience and coursebook content). Like learners in a classroom, trainees fashioned the input into their own likeness. TBL served as a tool for helping them approach PPP from different angles, and to move the pieces around with more confidence and purpose.

We said at the beginning of this article that, as trainers, 'we were concerned to expose trainees to TBL as an option in the presentation and practice of new language. However, our approach was teacher-centred and context-sensitive, in contrast to Willis', which was learner-centred and content-sensitive. While recognising the importance of Second Language Acquisition Research and its doubts concerning the effectiveness of a PPP approach (Willis, 1994), we feel that, at present, its learner- and learning-centred focus has little relation to our trainees' daily practice. Our local reality remains one in which teachers ask "what is it we have to teach?" and students ask "what do you want us to learn?" (Ellis, 1993:4).

There has been much recent interest in the idea of 'appropriate methodology' (Holliday, 1994), with an emphasis on the importance of local context and sociolinguistic as well as linguistic and psycholinguistic expertise to inform teaching and learning, and of course the view of them that informs training courses. Local knowledge, of classroom, curriculum, institution and culture, is more likely to decide the success or failure of new ideas or techniques, as opposed to 'any context-ignorant psycholinguistic principles in the learning group ideal' (Holliday, 1995:152).

Our introduction of TBL was grounded in local realities, where the coursebook and the teachers' own background and experience meant that PPP was an important local resource. Therefore we built into our version of TBL a clear language item focus, to ensure continuity and contiguity with local knowledge. The alternative 'model' ultimately helped teachers to be less reliant on their own model, and on models in general. One important consequence of this is that they are better-equipped to 'cut and repaste' coursebook activities and materials, which still remain the dominant structure in classroom planning in the Mexican language classroom.

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PEOPLE WHO TRAIN PEOPLE

Rachel Bodle is a business consultant in the UK whose specialist areas include the facilitation of group problem solving – for which clients range from Rank Hovis to the National Health Service. This is her second column.

T: Our second problem relates to itinerant staff. An organisation has peak busy times in the year, say at Easter and at Christmas. At this time lots of teachers are brought in from the outside on short-term contracts. The established all-year-round staff feel invaded and the new staff feel like outsiders.

R: All kinds of things might help in this situation -

- This organisation might have a half day of team-building activity at the start of each main intake period. The activities could be fun games, unrelated to teaching or the work of the organisation.
- I don't know if this organisation might have longer relationships with many of the staff brought in on short contracts. If so, could a cross-section of staff get together to brainstorm ways of providing continuity of team membership? My approach to doing this would depend on how well the problem was understood. Are there many ways in which different teachers relate to the organisation and therefore perhaps a need to explore the problem before looking for its solution? Or is the question well formulated so that all we need are solution ideas? If we needed first to understand, then I'd suggest that a group representing the range of teachers (all-year round and itinerant staff) involved with the organisation should come together to explore their different perspectives. I'd start this group off with a trigger question focusing on the issues arising around successful maintenance of communal team spirit, and use hexagon mapping (see TTT Volume II Number 2) in conjunction with nominal group technique to manage the group process during the idea gathering part of our session.

T: What do you mean by a "trigger question" and "nominal group technique"?

R: I'd use a deliberately open-ended question which is designed to "trigger" each person's thinking around continuity and team spirit in the organisation. A trigger question needs to provoke a response in each person: it'll often start with "From your perspective" or "In your experience", conveying the message that each person's own viewpoint is directly relevant. A good trigger question is the stimulus for a divergent group process. It won't ask for solution ideas directly but will stimulate the identification of factors which might need to be part of a solution. In this case the question might be:

"For someone with your relationship to this organisation, what are the factors which could contribute to the successful maintenance of a sense of continuity and team spirit?"

Nominal group technique is a way of managing the group interaction which ensures that, for some portion of the time, people are effectively working alone. It exists in several versions (some are described in Tudor Rickards' book, *Creativity & Problem-Solving at Work*, Gower 1988 & 1990). In the form I find useful, I start off with each person in the group doing some quiet thinking and personal note-making about the topic for discussion. After 5 minutes or so, I ask each person in turn for one of their ideas. I'll capture and display this idea as a headline on a hexagon. I'd make sure the group was clear about what the contributor meant to say, and of course, I'll want to be sure that the wording I've used reflects their intent, but wider discussion is not permitted at this point. I might go round the group, round robin fashion, several times before moving on – collecting both ideas noted by participants in their initial thinking, and additional ideas generated in response to previous contributions.

I impose this structured process to ensure the group has a range of contributions from a number of different perspectives before embarking on any consensus-seeking or problem-solving. It serves to avoid having a group rushing off at a tangent when they don't have "the big picture"! It reduces the likelihood of a dominant individual with strongly held ideas inhibiting more reticent group members who might otherwise hesitate and withhold contributions from their own different experience. It's also a useful device if I'm working with a group in an organisation with a strong hierarchy. In fact I find this structured approach a useful way to start off a session whenever I'm unsure how the group is going to work – I can always relax the formal 'rounds' and open up discussion later! And I will open things up if I sense the group is listening carefully to each contribution and is comfortable with exploring a range of possibilities before seeking to reach conclusions, or in any case once the bigger picture has emerged and over-simplistic solution seeking has become improbable.

T: What happens when ideas start to dry up?

R: Once the rate at which ideas were being generated has slowed, I'd move the group into clustering the idea/hexagons in order to let some clarity or focus emerge. I'd encourage them to cluster ideas where they perceived an interesting connection, – so this is **not** a straightforward process of "sorting out" the contributions according to some existing framework! In fact, the identification and discussion of differently-perceived connections can lead to new understanding of one-another's viewpoints.

The process of discussing connections and arranging then rearranging ideas is likely to lead eventually to a set of clusters which the group can agree upon. Together, we would then find appropriate labels for each cluster and also add to the map any obvious interactions between the main factors we've identified. There is often a very real sense of comfort and relief at this stage as the group sees that the complex problem they had assumed ownership of has now become more manageable! In a way we now know what we're up against and we've reformulated the problem.

Our organisation would now have a good understanding of the different ways in which the involvement of itinerant staff and the two seasonal busy periods undermine any feeling of communal team spirit. A number of solution ideas might be put forward as ways of easing the problem – and it may be apparent that some of these should be used in combination. The next steps could be straightforward – or we may need to delegate a sub-group to take away specific ideas and investigate their practicality.

T: That's clear. Thank you!

What's your Mentoring Style?

by Ingrid Wisniewska M.A., teacher trainer at the Jagiellonian University, Krakow,Poland and for the British Council at the Prague Pedagogical Centre in the Czech Republic.

Feedback sessions with a student teacher on teaching practice involve an intricate process of decisions based on constantly-changing variables: the mentor/trainee relationship, personalities, how the teaching practice is progressing and the stage of the interaction itself (to name but a few). Whether you are an experienced or an inexperienced mentor, here is an exercise that will help you to become more aware of the choices available to you in handling feedback sessions.

The text below is an extract from a feedback session with a third-year trainee after her first term of teaching practice. The trainee is Polish and has been teaching English to a class of 10-year-olds. As you go through the dialogue, stop each time you come to an options box. Imagine that you are the mentor in this situation. How would you respond? Choose the option that you would be most likely to use. As you continue reading , you will be able to guess the answer that was actually given, but this does not mean it was the best nor that the other choices are less valid.

Tick the comment you feel you would be most likely to give if you were the mentor in the following situation. Check your results at the end – what is your mentoring style?

(m = mentor t = trainee)

m = Thinking back to when you started teaching at the beginning of this term, what can you say about your own development?

t = I think I've improved quite a lot.

m = ...(choose one) : Options box 1

a) Yes I've noticed a lot of improvement too.

b) How have you improved exactly?

c) Yes, especially in your lesson planning.

d) Do you feel more confident now?

t = In terms of types of activities. I started off with some that were a little bit too difficult for them as I told you so far I've been teaching adults and, well, that was the effect.

m = ...(choose one) : Options box 2

a) Yes, it is sometimes difficult to switch from teaching adults to teaching children.

b) Can you be more specific about what has improved?

c) Yes, you vary the activities a lot more now, too.

d) What else do you think you've improved?

t = Timing perhaps and I think I've started to give the students more chances to speak up and to get them more involved. They have much more room: for production than they used to have.

m = ...(choose one) : Options box 3

a) Yes, you really give your students a chance to speak out now.

b) Do you feel that your students are saying as much as you want them to now?

c) Yes, and you respond to them much more positively than before.

d) What do you think you need to work on in future?

t = Discipline. I mean 5 b, they are really troublemakers. Out of the three classes I teach, I mean they are very nice but in terms of discipline they are the worst ones, that has to be said. And it's not only my problem, I don't know why. Some of them are really quite good as far as English goes. I have quite a few students who have been learning English for a year or two and who know quite alot but .....!

m = ...(choose one) : Options box 4

a) Yes, I've had classes like that too.

b) What have you tried with them so far?

c) What are you going to try with them?

d) Why don't you try using a more teacher-centred approach?

t = Well perhaps I should vary my activities and introduce some which will be very kind of quiet ones and some I could let them shout out. And then I don't know finish off with quiet ones. If they are so hyper-energetic why not use it somehow.....well, I have to think how because still you have to keep and maintain some order.

m = ...(choose one) : Options box 5

a) So you think it's a good idea to vary your activities more.

b) Can you think of any other way of dealing with the problem?

c) Would it be a good idea to explain this to your students?

d) What else do you think you need to improve?

t = Well it could be, yes, I might try it.

What's your score? Mostly a's? You tend to reaffirm your trainee's comments without leading into new topics. Mostly b's ? You usually encourage your trainee to elaborate on a theme they have initiated. Mostly c's ? You are inclined to use the trainee's comments to lead into your own comments or questions. Mostly d's? You tend to lead the discussion in the direction you think it should go.

While you were reading this you probably thought of a dozen other interventions to make in each case, or reasons for not intervening at all – which makes this a useful activity for raising awareness of different approaches to mentoring. Whether for self-development or for mentor training, this type of exercise can provoke some thoughtful reflections on your mentoring style.

A Teacher's Essay on Criticism

Richard Watson Todd, Thailand

Poetry often stimulates more thought – provoking responses in the reader than prose, as it can create more powerful and memorable images and can strike more resounding chords with the readers. Writing poetry yourself, however, is difficult and may result in doggerel. An alternative is to adapt existing poems to your own ends, and the following is my adaptation of Pope's 'An Essay on Criticism' which presents arguments concerning teacher training. The original poem can be found in many collections of poetry.

'Tis hard to say, if greater want of skill
Appear in learning or in teaching ill;
But, of the two, less dang' rous is th; offence
To learn ill than teach to mislead our sense.
Wrong-headed learners have but selves to blame,
Harm only themselves with misguided aim;
The poor teacher though who directs a farce
Does damage to all who attend her class,
As the sketch by ill-col'ring is disgraced
So by false teaching is good sense defaced.
Then whence do teaching fallacies derive?
And how to emend to make learning thrive?

Training is the source of much teaching thought
And training is where reasons should be sought
For teaching failures which in turn do lead
To learning efforts sundered as a seed.
The faults of training are a lack of time,
A surface viewpoint and no heights to climb.
A little training is a dang'rous thing
Drink deep, or taste not the TESOL spring:
There shallow drafts intoxicate the brain,
And drinking largely sobers us again.
Fired at first sight with what the Prof. imparts
In fearless youth we tempt the heights of Arts,
While from the bounded level of our mind,
Short views we take, nor see the lengths behind.
TESOL varies more than a flick'ring light
We praise at morning what we blame at night;
There's no global view for us to follow
In shallow theories and techniques we wallow.
Some bright surmise of the trainer's mind
We learn too well and copy as the blind:
The trainee thus through imitation errs
And knows not the depths of th'ideas she bears.
So what should be done? How can trainees see
The concealed basis behind the theory?

Need we to critique, need we to decide
What theories to keep, what theories to chide?
Uncountable methods all have some worth
But of bases to judge on – alas, a dearth.
The training at present gives us no choice:
Obeying the method we lose our voice,
Our minds, our freedom, our hearts and our will.
There is no best way, no way is all ill.
Teaching resembles poetry, in each
Are nameless graces which no methods teach;
To reach these graces we should look behind
The automaton way which restricts the mind
To the feelings and reasons which lie below
That free the teacher to let teaching flow,
That allow learners to imbibe their fill,
To thrill in learning and obtain all skill.

Poems such as this may provide views on TEFL in a powerful, stimulating and memorable way. They can be used as an alternative source of input for trainees or simply as an extra reading text to contemplate and reflect upon. Poetry in general is more open to interpretation than closely-argued articles, and thus allows trainees to find their own meanings and understandings rather than blindly attempting to identify the meanings of an academic author in an article.

There are numerous sources available for adaptation. Modern poetry, Shakespeare speeches and even limericks can be used in addition to more traditional poetry such as Pope. Perhaps you would like to try making an adaptation yourself. Be brave, play with the language and have fun!

Note

1 Thanks are due to Thomas Radzienda for his literary criticism. Any doggerel remaining is entirely of my own concoction.

P.S. Please send other adapted poems or limericks in to the editor!

John Haycraft

John Haycraft, who with his wife Brita founded International House (IH), died in May 1996. I had met John several times, usually when he came up to me after a presentation to offer his radical and amusing comments on the topic I had presented!

After reading the sympathetic obituary in Modern English Teacher (Vol. 5 No. 4 1996), with its wonderful photograph, I felt a real gap. So I wrote to Brita Haycraft, then Head of Speech Training at IH, to ask if she would consider writing something about just how it had felt to start the EFL teacher training programme together at IH in the sixties. Happily, Brita agreed and sent me a draft saying,

"All the things I wanted to say have gone into it, using three sources of John's: 1. *Babel in London* (Hamish Hamilton 1965), 2. *The Early Days of Teacher Training* (British Council ELT Review No.1 1990) and 3. *Memoirs*, completed February 1996, to be published by Constable, autumn 1998. I have stitched my own memories in with extracts from John's writings. In a few instances I have paraphrased his text."

The Editor

Pioneering EFL Teacher Training

by Brita Haycraft

THE NEED FOR TEACHERS

By 1962, students were flocking to our Shaftesbury Avenue school to learn English and we rapidly needed more teachers. Where could we find good teachers at short notice?

"Charm and good looks could not be a substitute for good teaching. One of the real 'racket' aspects of language schools is how easy it is to have a full class, regular attendance and purring students because some undergraduate employed for the summer months brings youth and brightness into a class. Of course students learn more with someone they like, but they are not to know either that if their teacher had some knowledge of class techniques and presentation they might learn twice as much in half the time."[1] No longer was there the time "to observe and advise the new recruits and perhaps after three months turn them into good teachers."[3]

"Little or no practical training for the EFL classroom then existed. Teaching the language played no part in language degrees or linguistics. Teaching English to foreigners, as TEFL was then called, was not a profession and private schools were regarded generally as rackets. Those who taught there often had the attitude "I'm English.So I can teach my own language, can't I?" [2]

Was there a real qualification for teaching English to foreigners? The answer was 'no'."[3] A degree in a foreign language did not tell you how to teach it. Linguistics and phonetics courses were highly academic and not concerned with teaching. So John had the idea of starting our own course for training teachers.

THE FIRST COURSES

"In June 1962, we started the first of our Teacher Training Courses. The response confirmed the need for them: from a single classified advertisement in the The New Statesman, inserted for three weeks, we filled up our first course with the stated maximum of twelve. Anyone was allowed to enrol, even if they had no degree or teaching experience. And in practice we found that, as English to foreigners is so different,previous qualifications had little to do with whether a course member was good or bad."[1]

The training course was short but intensive. "Lack of time compelled us to cut background theory to a minimum. Out of 40 sessions 16 were devoted to teaching Grammar, 7 to Pronunciation and one to each of the following: Class techniques, Visual Aids, Teaching Beginners, Use of the Tape Recorder, Exams, Correcting, Conversation Classes. Teaching English to adults from other countries was very different from that in the ordinary English secondary school where a class could deal with any subject by talking about it. The crux was to teach a beginners' class with perhaps eight different nationalities, using no language except English. You couldn't translate but had to resort to vivid pictures and mime." [1] Maybe the flickering theatre lights from the Lyric and the Globe across the street inspired our teaching.

"There was the problem of how to practise the new construction. Here a teacher's role really was similar to the theatre producer's. He had his theme. How was it to be expressed on the stage? What actors did he have? What props and effects could he use? Sometimes he was a clown: the best explanation of the expression 'to fall flat' I have ever seen was when John Hardy, one of our teachers, just fell like a newly sawn tree onto the carpet.

It was necessary to know English from the foreigner's point of view. Here are some of the questions which might casually be flung at one in class:

'When do we use "some" and when "any"?'

'What is the difference between "I have been in France" and "I was in France"?'

'What is the difference between "after" and "afterwards"?'

'Which syllable do we usually stress in English?'

On the methodological side, we dealt with such platitudes as clear communication, neat blackboard work, never starting a question with a student's name in case he sat back obliviously when he had answered, or going round a class in a circular way with tests and questions, in case the unexpected was lost and attention wandered. The object, as I saw it, was to ensure students learnt sixty minutes out of sixty.

The rest of the course time was devoted to actual teaching practice, for which the class was divided into groups of six trainees. First, the trainee teachers taught the rest of their group. Then foreign students were brought in as a volunteer language class." [1] So before they had time to hesitate, the trainees had their first taste of teaching. Standing up, one after the other, they gave a lesson to eager language students, watched by fellow trainees and tutor. I can only remember trainees entering into this arrangement with cheerful cooperation. After all,it was a totally novel idea. The world might have seen courses with a master class component. But none where the teachers-to-be themselves taught, before an audience, as it were, and definitely not day in day out throughout a whole course. Perhaps the bold spirit of the 60s London reigned.

"After each trainee had finished his/her ten minute lesson, everyone would discuss how each mini-class had gone and how it could be improved. The volunteer students who, after all, were the ones being taught, were also asked: "He not speak well", or "She write bad on blackboard" or,pointing, "She is best! *Molto viva!*" [3]

The immediate feedback to the trainees was also a new development and improved the course by the day. The tutors' comments were gentle and constructive, as if rearing vulnerable fledglings, warning of dangers and risks, praising them for enterprise and effort. Perhaps it was this aftercare that made our courses. I have since seen it applied equally tenderly by tutors of other nationalities on our IH teacher training courses for other modern languages.

"After teaching practice, the trainees observed ordinary classes for a further two hours a day. This observation was valuable in giving them further experience in EFL classrooms and confronting them with some of the problems that might arise." [2]

John was conscious of the limited preparation."The courses were rather like driving lessons. We provided an alternative to learning through crashing into lamp posts or running people down. At the end we, like the usual test examiner, might say: 'Well, you're now safe enough to be let onto the road. But don't think you're a good driver.' At the end there was a two-hour exam on pronunciation, grammar and class techniques. We supplied a certificate giving a frank opinion of the ability and progress. If this was good, it stood as a useful teacher's reference; if bad, it was useless."[1]

Someone else might have decided on one course a year, but John, seeing the need for teachers everywhere, not just in our school, soon put on more courses. "With a similar advertisement in the *Times Educational Supplement* we also managed to fill all later courses without difficulty."[1] Before long, a proper department existed. We called it The International Teacher Training Institute.

ADVANTAGES

"From our own point of view, the courses were an immense advantage. Financially we gained little, as we charged a minimum fee but we were now able to ensure that all our new staff had some basic training."[1] From now on, we could of course choose the most promising trainees for ourselves. If someone was interviewed and seemed a good potential teacher, we'd send him on the course. New teachers soon settled in, having done the course in our midst and noticing how the school operated. Teachers became firm friends, as they had all been through the same ordeal.

The whole school thrived on the teacher training courses. Tutors taught regular classes between courses and never lost touch with classroom reality but were able to fine-tune both their training course and their own teaching. Teachers started sitting in on each other and there was never "the suspicious guarding of new ideas so common in many staffrooms at the time." [2] The staffroom buzzed with talk about teaching methods and new ideas demonstrated at staff meetings. I remember a brown parcel held up by a new teacher called Sue Lake, who asked what was in it, eliciting from us *It could / can't /might/ couldn't be....* just as with her students.

"To begin with, the volunteer classes had been free. But, as I soon realised, this meant that students attended irregularly and were not committed. So as the courses multiplied, we charged a minimal fee, giving more teaching for very little extra, which attracted new students. Also the British trainees were anxious to get to know the students, as it might help them teach better. So our students got extra conversational practice with English people, something they always felt would never happen in cold, bustling London." [3]

All our newly hatched teachers, with a pass or not, soon got jobs in other schools, gradually populating London's staffrooms, then spreading abroad, as IH opened teacher training units in affiliated schools in Italy, France, Spain and even Egypt. For years there was no sign of any other school starting its own teacher training. Perhaps there was no need, given our supply. A school might have felt reluctant to have to re-train their existing staff, quite understandably, or change their routine. For a new school, it was easier.

John didn't mind the somewhat cumbersome organisation with the need for two extra classrooms and two tutors two hours every day, and no added fees to cover it. They had to be large rooms, too, to hold trainees, students and observers. On the other hand, the early afternoon was often slack with empty classrooms. And John reckoned that this lively activity with more English-speaking people around would enhance the school atmosphere and be good publicity - leading to increased growth. It did.

continued ►

WHAT MADE US THINK WE COULD TRAIN TEACHERS?

There did exist summer courses for teachers. We had even taught on several ourselves, John dealing with grammar and lexis, me sorting out the phonetics. That wasn't in Britain but in Sweden. Though popular, these courses said nothing about how to teach. Six seasons with students in Southern Spain had also showed us the complexities (and fun) of teaching adults. It was now, in London, however, with students from different countries in the same class that effective classroom methods became crucial.

Perhaps it was not such a far-fetched idea, as John's recently written course *Getting On In English* for the BBC English By Radio could provide teaching points for the trainees.

It was also the 60s with a world of plenty open to optimistic graduates. If our course or school collapsed, we felt there were lots we could do elsewhere. Living was easy and travel was cheap and we were at one time thinking about another spell abroad, this time in Yugoslavia, to see what life was like in another Mediterranean country under a dictatorship different from Spain's. However, a third child on the way grounded that project.

CRITICISM

"There were those who attacked us for employing people after only two weeks' training, to which the answer was: "Do you know any longer, practical course for EFL teachers?" And to those in EFL: "Why don't you provide some kind of longer preparation, yourselves?" Ideally we would have liked to extend the course. However, few people could get away for more than a fortnight or could take more evenings off. Nevertheless we found at the end of it that the better student teachers were good enough to take classes."[1]

Within a few years the course had been lengthened to three and then four weeks, its present duration. We didn't have the funds to run a longer course at a price that student-teachers could afford. Had we been a university body, they could have got grants. But when we asked the Ministry of Education for grant status to run a year's course, they replied that we'd have to run one first for them to evaluate. And when we wanted evaluation of our short course, they said it was impossible, as there was no precedent for a course less than a year long! John never took the matter further, even though universities must have awarded grants to students on for their summer courses themselves, and still do. A couple of decades later, many universities were to put on teacher-training courses following our model, - part funded, no doubt.

GOING IT ALONE

However, there were advantages in going it alone: No aggravating bureaucratic procedures. No delays. We could act immediately, as indeed we did. "At least, the course started from the right end, devised because it was desperately needed, not padded with traditional academic fat."[3]

In fact, the short course had many clear benefits. We didn't have to wait a year to see if the course worked. Within weeks mistakes could be rectified and the course improved.

As tutors alternated between teacher training and real teaching within a short space of time, new classroom ideas were soon added to the training course.

Lasting only two weeks meant the course was cheap and accessible to most. A promising trainee who for some reason failed could simply repeat the course and do brilliantly. This did happen with one or two subsequent EFL stars. And of course a longer course might have made both trainees and tutors think twice about leaping into new directions.

"The course was certainly very intensive and it still is today But it was and is enjoyable. It came to be accepted that hierarchy and status are barriers to communication. There was a feeling that this was not work, because everyone was involved in preparing for that ultimate denouement: effective teaching practice, into which were drawn the awakening skills produced by seminars, observation of classes, and the formative comments of trainers, colleagues and learners.

In 1978 ... Steve Walters of the Bell Eductional Trust asked me if I would welcome an RSA Certificate at initial training level. I agreed because I have never felt teacher training should be the monopoly of one organisation. The scheme is now certificated by the University of Cambridge and Royal Society of Arts, and courses are conducted in many centres throughout the world." [2]

"From tentative beginnings in tatty premises in the heart of London was born a significant activity that was to grow and grow to the specialised training of more than 35,000 teachers, both in Britain and abroad." [3]

Post Script

"More than a year has passed since I took part in a DILIT* teacher training course at IH Rome and I think back with pleasure and nostalgia to those "special days" . Often, in the space of one afternoon, I would see the teaching principles which I had experienced up to then in school and university contexts turned right on their heads. The course was a time of great intensity and it was with vibrant curiosity that we looked forward to the next morning. The pleasure of daily discoveries was not lost as it might have been, had we been working through the sequential chapters of a training book. Of course the road to be followed was defined and yet the sensation I had was that I was taking part in a moving experiment which required my personal involvement to make it happen. The thing I am most grateful to my training course for is the principle of "emotionally involving research" which still today helps me make my work full and satisfying.

I am certainly in debt to my trainers for a whole series of major and minor practical suggestions that a person as ignorant as I was of teaching would only otherwise have

been able to acquire after a lot of tedious trial and error. The advantage of trying things out for the first time with a trainer to guide you and surrounded by a supportive group is incalculable. The training course was an ideal time for self-awareness and personal growth because of the following things that happened on it: we saw ourselves reflected in the others, we exposed ourselves, we acted in broad daylight, we had to justify our own behaviour, we freed ourselves of the ballast of idiosyncrasies and peevishness and we laid ourselves open to well-founded criticism. In addition to all this, as course participants, we were in contact with a genuine work environment, not one created ad hoc as can happen with seminars. The usefulness to a person starting work of this awareness of the world of work is not to be underestimated.

by Piero Salabe (translated from Italian by Mario Rinvolucri)

*This is an equivalent of the IH 4 week teacher training course set up by the Haycrafts, but for teaching Italian.

TRAINER BACKGROUND

Using graded readers in the classroom – practical considerations

by Derek Strange

Derek Strange designed the *Penguin Readers* series from scratch, including the syllabus, wordlists and guidelines for writers. He wrote one of the Level 1 original books and has done several adaptations at other levels of the series. He has now developed the series to more than 180 books. In the following article he gives practical tips for choosing graded English readers, for setting up systems and for using readers with classes. The article may help you when running a session with teachers on 'extensive or pleasure-reading' with language learners.

Practicality No.1: reasons for using graded readers (Why?)

Answers to the question '*Why* use graded readers?' relate to these three general objectives in the teaching of reading:

1 *motivation* to read English for entertainment or information
2 development of *reading fluency* (*extensive*, rather than *intensive* reading skills, therefore)
3 *vocabulary* development

I list them deliberately in that order, to indicate what I see as the priorities with using graded readers: if we get the first one right – motivation through entertainment – then the other two will follow.

Good graded readers must be good BOOKS, first and foremost, providing entertainment in just the same way as the novels we pick from the library shelf or the railway bookstall for our leisure-time reading. Graded readers obviously have another purpose too: to provide the language learning opportunities listed above. But entertainment and learning go particularly closely together in graded readers, and it is the entertainment value which opens the way for the learning, I believe.

I am convinced that a large part of our work in the language classroom succeeds if students are reacting, personally and individually, to the *subject matter* of our lessons and the materials we use in them. If students are feeling excited or frightened at a thrilling horror or ghost or adventure story (or laughing at something funny, feeling sad about something sad, etc.), if they are *reacting* to the input and content of our lessons, then we have communicated with them through the new language they are learning. Students will see that the new language has worked as a living, dynamic, *personal* medium of communication, as it should. On the basis of this personal communicative awareness, study of the forms and development of skills in the language can be built. The process starts from the stimulus of the input and materials of our lessons ... and that is where graded readers can make their useful contribution to our work: by giving learners an entertaining, very personal language learning experience.

Practicality No.2: buying the right books (What?)

There are a lot of attractive, appealing, well-written new series of readers in the EFL bookshops nowadays, designed specifically to provide learning materials which cater for the language objectives I have identified. In the series of graded readers that I edit, for example, there is a wide selection of film- and TV-related adventure stories and thrillers, which students will instantly recognize and feel encouraged to attempt (*Get Shorty*, *The Lost World*, *Men In Black*, *Baywatch*, *Psycho*, to name some recently published ones), famous classics (some also with a film or TV tie-in: *Emma*, *Pride and Prejudice*, *Little Women*, *Washington Square*, etc.), well-known non-fiction (*The Diary of A Young Girl* by Anne Frank, *Ring of Bright Water*, a collection of football anecdotes, etc.), humorous titles (*Jumanji*, *The Book of Heroic Failures*, etc.), and so on.

So my first piece of practical advice to teachers wanting to begin or maintain the use of graded readers would be this: get your objectives and priorities right when you shop for readers. Choose the books you buy carefully, with the students' entertainment (and resulting motivation) foremost in mind. Buy what you think the students want, not what you think is 'good for them'. Give them *an entertaining read*!

continued

Practicality No.3: setting up a reading scheme (Which? and Where?)

The main series of readers are graded in grammatical steps – they are usually written to a syllabus similar to that of coursebooks at the relevant levels – and in vocabulary – the readers are written within set wordlists, with specific vocabulary controls. As a first step, it is a good idea to see what the main grammatical and lexical features of the design of a series of readers are. If you buy readers from more than one series, you will find that the level-numbers do not precisely coincide, so you will have to assess the level of each book so that you can select appropriate readers for students of different abilities.

The *Penguin Readers* series, for example, aims to help teachers estimate the appropriateness of books to students' abilities with a grammatical note 'To the teacher', which outlines the main features of the grammatical syllabus for each level, and, on the back cover, an indication of the number of words in the wordlist for that level. Most major series of readers have similar indicators for the guidance of teachers.

The next, obvious step is to find a good *place* for your library of readers. Some schools have a Resources Room, others have small 'libraries' on classroom shelves, others use 'library boxes'. Display the readers in the place you choose, so that it is easy for students to see the levels and types of books available.

Practicality No.4: running a reading scheme (How?)

Introduce classes systematically to the collection of readers:

1 Show them the whole collection and the level/s of books that you think are approximately appropriate to their abilities. Pull out and show some of the titles in that level that you think will appeal most to the age and interests of those particular students.
2 Explain any monitoring system you may wish to put in place for them and you to keep track of their amount of reading and their progress – a Reading Chart on a classroom wall or individual Reading Logs or Diaries, for example.
3 Explain the way/s in which you want students to use the exercises that are usually at the back of each book and the way you want to mark and monitor their work on these – handing in completed exercises and/or reading logs every week, for example. With the *Penguin Readers* and some other major series of graded readers extra 'Factsheets' or worksheets are also available (free of charge), which provide extra information about books and further, more intensive exercises on them.

In some secondary schools it may be possible to ask for volunteers from higher classes to help with setting up and running the libraries for lower classes, checking finished exercises and seeing that records of progress are kept up to date. The extra marking work involved in running a graded reading scheme can be heavy, so enlisting the help of higher-level or more able students alleviates that load and leaves more time for the teacher to devote to weaker students.

You may want to use your graded readers in different ways, but the same general introduction to and explanation of their existence and purpose applies. Readers can be used in these ways:
1 in class sets, with all the students reading the same book at the same time, section by section, in a class reading lesson
2 in a class reading lesson, but with students reading different books which they have selected from the library
3 in an informal lending system, where students select books for themselves and read them at home, at their own pace, in just the same way as we use public lending libraries.

It is a matter for the teacher's judgement which method to use and whether or not to vary the students' use of the readers – ways 1 and 3 above can be combined and varied, for example, in class 'library lessons' with individual follow-up homework to finish reading the same books.

Another word of advice here: do not stick to one rigid system for the use of graded readers. Vary their use and never let it become a chore. Remember: the main aim in using graded readers is for the students to *enjoy* them, as good books.

Practicality No.5: working with readers – suggestions (again, How?)

We now come back to those other two objectives that I listed after 'Motivation' at the beginning of this article: development of *reading fluency* and *vocabulary*.

Most publishers of graded readers offer free Guides to teachers, which contain general advice and lists of specific practical ideas on how to use their books. It is worth trying to get and read these short practical guides to the books you buy. Along with the series that I edit, for example, there is a useful pamphlet on *Using Graded Readers*. It outlines some of the main possible activities with graded readers, as follows.

'Before reading' activities:
- *plot prediction* work using the title of a book, the plot summaries that are to be found in its introduction or its back cover blurb, its chapter headings
- *familiarization with the characters* in a story by looking through the illustrations in the book and making guesses about incidents in the plot and about characters' roles in them
- *vocabulary preparation and prediction* work, based on 'families' of key words which may or may not appear in the story.

'While reading' activities:
- *identifying main points*/incidents, reviewing what has already happened and making plot summaries (related to chapter headings perhaps)
- *predicting* what is going to happen next
- *creating plot-maps, flow charts, time charts* or *character/relationship charts* of what has happened and to whom
- making *links to real life* – relating to students' own similar experiences
- continuously updating and extending *personal reading diaries*.

'After reading' activities:

- *using the exercises provided* in the back of books, especially the 'Vocabulary Work' exercises, which are a unique feature of the *Penguin Readers*
- *reviewing plot via characters* – possibly following the sequence of illustrations through the book again): who did what, where, when and why?
- *writing character descriptions*
- *converting a scene of the book into a screen-play* for a film. This works well with books which have been made into films, with which students may be familiar, such as many of the *Penguin Readers*, for example
- *watching a film or video* of the book, and perhaps noting differences between the screen and book versions of the story or characterization. This is an excellent way to round off whole-class use of a set of copies of the same book at the same time.

Many of the above suggestions are implicit in the *structure* of individual stories, which itself often suggests possible openings for work on specific reading skills (prediction, summarizing) or on vocabulary (guessing unknown words from context). It is therefore important to read each story before you use it with a class, to identify the best openings for reading skills and comprehension work, as well as the points of the language where your students may need help.

A final word: don't forget those all-important *personal reactions* to the story as a piece of fictional writing after students have read it (i.e. a simple literary review – 'What did *you* think of ...?'); you might possibly ask students to suggest and perhaps write *an alternative ending* to the story from their own imaginations, for example. Such personal creative input involves students very effectively in the creative aspects of story writing. It focuses on the entertainment aspects of the book and inspires a fundamental *motivation* to read, read and read in English.

Possible further reading:

Class Readers, Jean Greenwood, Oxford University Press.
Using Readers in Language Teaching, Tricia Hedge, Macmillan

The Extensive Reading Handbook for Secondary Teachers, Gail Ellis & John McRae, Penguin (especially Part 1)

Foreword

When I was at University in the UK no teacher **ever** asked for my opinion or feedback on any lecture, seminar or tutorial. Recently, dropping into University departments to teach or study in the UK and abroad, I have noticed empty evaluation forms lying around here and there. Maybe things are changing. Here's one University teacher who asks for students' opinions. If you have experience of "University feedback" why not write in and tell us ? (Ed)

Are you honest ?

A feedback activity for teacher training.
Elizabeth Adams University of Jaen, Spain

Introduction

I used this activity with a group of Spanish students, in a Didactics' option in the final year of their degree in English Philology. This element of the course is a practical one and the class takes place at 1.30 pm. the last hour of a full morning's classes which begin at 8.30am. (and which are in the main, theoretical) The focus and content of these classes is on things practical, covering the use of teaching resources, games, game – like activities, music, song, video etc., and incorporates classroom management as as integral part of the course.

I always aim to involve the students,who are to become teachers, as actively as possible, in order to let them think through and experience things for themselves, but the effect of the time slot on their levels of interest and concentration tend work against me. One day I needed to present in a limited time, a fair amount of information, and took" the easy" way out and opted for a lecture format, as it seemed the best way to get the information across in a short time, although the lecture format is not one I personally feel comfortable with.

The glazed expressions, the stifled and not so stifled yawns were not easy to ignore., and when at 2.30pm. the students, animated at last, crowded out of the room, to head for the buses that would take them home to lunch, I had a good idea how they were feeling. As for me the experience had been pretty negative too.

As the ghost of this lesson continued to haunt me, I felt it shouldn't be simply swept under the carpet and ignored. Perhaps something could be salvaged, and I devised this activity for the next time we met as a class.

"Are you honest?" The activity

This is how it went:

1. I gave out blank slips of paper to all the students, not at this stage explaining why. As I don't usually start the session in this way it created a certain amount of curiosity.

2. I asked the whole class a question, telling them that I didn't want them to answer to answer aloud or even

continued ►

immediately, but rather to think about their response to it. The question was "Are you honest? There were a few giggles, and whisperings of exchanged comments.

3. I then asked the students to cast their minds back to the lesson of the previous week, (they had probably already obliterated most of it from their minds, but a few clues revived some trace elements, which may have triggered off others) and to write down briefly, how they had honestly felt during that lesson.

4. I told them to fold up their slips of paper without showing them to anyone, to leave them anonymous, then to pass them to the student at the end of the row. This student then had the honour of opening the slips and having a quick glance at them so as to get a general idea of what people had written, and to select two or three comments for whatever reason, e.g. because they were representative, revealing, daring, interesting....

5. We made the seating arrangements less formal for the next part of the activity, with students in a double horseshoe, and I asked those students who had collected and selected the slips to read them out loud to the rest of us. This generated some expectation as students were curious to find out what others had written, whether their own comments had been selected, and perhaps a degree of apprehension spiced things up a bit.

6. When the selected comments had been read out to the expectant audience, and received in various ways, I asked another student to read out a note that I had previously prepared without their knowledge, about that same (negatively memorable for me) lesson. The students were initially rather bemused by this and wondered what might happen next. The note, of course, contained comments remarkably similar in content to those which the students had written, e.g. that the students had been bored, tired, hungry, a more interactive approach might have kept more people interested, they had to listen for a long time while I spoke and they found it difficult at that late stage in the morning not to let their minds drift off to more pleasant places, etc..

7. The follow up :

I wanted this activity to speak for itself, and hoped students might draw their own conclusions, but we did spend a few minutes talking about it afterwards, gathering the threads together and getting their feelings about the activity, which they seemed to have found initially a bit surprising, then fun, and hopefully, thought provoking.

Some reflections

I believe this activity was useful in several ways:

- It forced the students to reflect on how they felt during a particular lesson, to consider some of the reasons for those feelings, and the chance to express them anonymously.
- It made them aware that I had been aware of the "negative" aspects of the lesson, and that as future teachers they too need to be conscious of what happens in their classes and to look at some of the reasons why.
- It introduced them to one kind of feedback collecting activity.
- It reminded them, as future teachers of factors, e.g. the time of day, the day of the week, the previous subject on the timetable, the students' state of mind; that teachers have little or no control over, but that there are things we can do, which make the teaching and learning situation more stimulating and motivating.
- For these Spanish students largely brought up on a diet of education through theory, with not much classroom interaction, I had the impression that it was unusual for them to be asked to express their opinions honestly and then to have those opinions publicly exposed. Nevertheless once started, they saw that it worked, and it may have given them confidence to try out some kind of feedback activities in their future teaching situations.

Conclusion

This particular activity might seem a bit risky and threatening for inexperienced teachers, it was however, suitable in this training context. It served as a useful introduction to the idea of reflective teaching for future teachers, and paved the way for introducing other ways of collecting information on what happens in the classroom, for teachers to reflect and act upon. In this particular case, this teacher trainer did not use the lecture format again at 1.30 pm with these students.!

Would you like to send something in to "The Teacher Trainer"?

"The Teacher Trainer" is designed to be a forum for trainers, teachers and trainees all over the world. If you'd like to send in a letter, a comment, a cartoon, a taped conversation or an article sharing information, ideas or opinions we'll be very happy to receive it. If you would like to send us an article, please try to write it in an accessible non-academic style. Lengths should normally be 800 – 4,000 words. Send your first draft typed in double spacing with broad margins. Your article will be acknowledged by pro-forma letter. Once you have had comments back later and have finalised your draft in negotiation with the editor, we will ask you to send us three hard (paper) copies and if at all possible a floppy disk (micro 3½" or 9cm). **Your article needs to be saved on the disk as an ASCII file**. Keep your headings and sub-headings in upper and lower case throughout. Finally, please give an accurate word count. We try to publish your article within about three issues, but if it is an awkward length it may be longer. It will be assumed that your article has not been published before nor is being considered by another publication. We look forward to reading your article!

Helping teachers to reflect – an application of NLP

by David Bowker, Australia

In-service training courses can provide teachers not only with input from trainers but also an opportunity to learn from each other and to stand back and reflect on their own teaching. Often, however, courses can be so packed with content that little space for reflection is built in. In addition, reflection is not necessarily easy and it may end up being rather superficial. Ideally, reflection should help to make teachers aware of habitual behaviour and underlying beliefs that they may be unconscious of, so enabling them to expand the range of choices available to them.

I am going to describe a model and associated technique that I have found useful as a way of structuring reflection in a way that helps teachers to reflect more deeply than they might otherwise do. As it can involve them in sharing their reflections with someone else, it is also a interesting way of allowing teachers to learn from each other. The model is that of 'Logical Levels' developed by Robert Dilts, a writer and trainer in the field of Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP)[1]. It suggests that we can look at ourselves in relation to a particular issue or situation from five different points of view:

Identity – who we are, our role in a particular situation;
Belief – the beliefs and values that we have, why we do what we do;
Capability – the skills and strategies we use, how we do what we do;
Behaviour – what we do;
Environment – where and when we do what we do.

These can be seen as levels in a hierarchy, with Identity at the top, or as concentric circles, with Identity as the inner core.

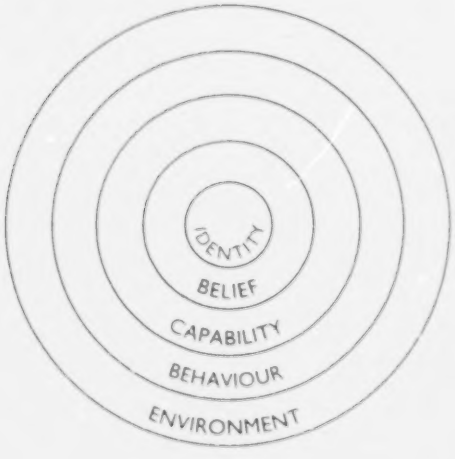

Fig. 1 Logical levels

An awareness of the different levels can be useful when we are helping others to reflect on their teaching, as they remind us of different types of question we can ask. For example:

- Environment: Where do you plan your lessons? When do you correct errors? How do you like your classroom to be laid out?
- Behaviour: What do you do to start your lessons? How do you correct learners' writing?
- Capability: How do you manage to time your lessons so well? What skills do you use to foster group cohesion?
- Belief: Why do you get learners to make up their own examples? Why do you think it's important to use only English in the classroom?
- Identity: How do you see yourself in relation to the learners? What is your role during fluency activities?

Another way of looking at this is that a question that we ask might be answered on different levels. E.g. In answer to the question 'In how much detail do you time your lessons?', you might get a reply on the level of Belief ('I think it's important to respond flexibly to the Ss'), or Capability ('I have a very good feel for timing in the class') or Behaviour ('I write in rough timings'). The model thus presupposes that there are always several layers that can be uncovered, and that having this model in our minds as we ask questions (of ourselves or someone else) enables us to move up or down (or in or out of) the levels to get more information than we would otherwise.

The model in practice

As well as this model, Robert Dilts has also developed a technique which he calls the logical level alignment process. The idea of this is that over time changes take place in the different levels and that a change on one level may cause a change in the level above and/or below it, ultimately leading to change in the whole system. For example, a trainee teacher learns to hear word stress (Capability) and so becomes convinced of its importance (Belief) and starts to teach it (Behaviour). This change may also extend their view of themselves as a competent teacher of pronunciation (Identity). However, a change on one level may take some time before it affects other levels. The alignment process helps us to review the changes that have taken place or are taking place in our teaching and to ensure that each level is congruent with the others. One benefit of this is that it can help us to challenge what Peter Maingay2 has described as ritualised teaching behaviour, where our beliefs are no longer in tune with our behaviour. Whether or not the levels are 'out of alignment' in this way, I have found the alignment process to be a powerful aid to reflection and a structured way of gathering information.

Here is a brief description of the process, which involves two people whom I will call the 'questioner' and the 'explorer'. At the same time I will give examples (in *italics*) of some of the questions I asked and the answers that were given by a teacher going through this process.

continued ►

The explorer decides on an area they want to investigate. This could be as broad as 'myself as teacher' or as specific as 'what happened in the last lesson'. I have found that a good place to begin is an area of your teaching you feel you're good at or you enjoy (or that other people think you're good at).

Q: Is there an area you think you're good at that you'd like to talk about?

E: Yes. Materials preparation and lesson planning.

The questioner then starts by asking questions on the level of Environment. There are two reasons for starting the questioning at this level and not at Identity. Firstly, it is easier to think and talk about this surface level. Secondly, it helps the explorer to focus on their concrete experience, to recall the situation in their mind's eye.

Q: Where and when do you plan your lessons? (Environment)

E: In my dining room in the evening or early morning.

The questioner then takes the explorer through each level until they get to Identity. As they go up/in, the explorer needs more time to answer as they begin to reflect more deeply.

Q: And what do you do when you prepare lessons? (Behaviour)

E: I visualise individual students and what they'd be interested in, and then I look at books to get ideas, and then I select things and put them together to make a cohesive whole

Q: What are the skills you have that enable you to create these lessons? (Capability)

E: Patience, an interest in knowing and using resources, and a knowledge of individuals.

Q: What do you believe is important when you're preparing materials? (Belief)

E: Respect for individuals. It's important to be organised.

Q: Who do you see yourself as when you're preparing materials? (Identity)

E: A facilitator, organising behind the scenes.

At the Identity level, it can be very illuminating to ask the explorer to think of a metaphor to describe themselves.

Q: What metaphor can you think of to describe yourself when planning lessons? Maybe an animal, a job ...

E: A wizard – a force for good, but secretly. A bit magical, because there's a certain alchemy in trying to create things well.

For this teacher, seeing herself as a wizard was much richer and more personal than just being a facilitator.

Whether or not you find a metaphor, the process continues back down the levels, with the questioner asking the explorer to use the insights they have had at the higher/inner levels to add to their previous reflections.

*Q: Take this sense of being a wizard back to the level of **belief**. Does it add anything to what you see as important?*

E: Yes. There should be a subtlety about things. Things should be crafted in an unobtrusive way.

*Q: And does that sense add anything to your understanding of your **skills and capability** as a lesson planner?*

E: Yes. I have sense of quietness and inner resource which enables me to give time and energy to other people.

*Q: Take that sense of quietness and inner resource into the level of **behaviour**. Do you notice anything more about what you're doing when you plan lessons?*

E: Yes. I'm looking for good links between ideas and activities, and I'm tailoring things so they go together in a seamless fashion.

*Q: Now take everything you've become aware of into the **environment** level. What do you notice about where and when you prepare lessons?*

E: I've realised that my dining room is very nice because it looks out onto fields and woods, and it's very peaceful and calm, and I think that must be why I prepare in that room because it's got a sense of privacy and peacefulness and brightness so it liberates me to carry through these different things.

I hope that even this very abbreviated transcript gives something of the flavour of the process, of how moving 'up' through the levels in this systematic way helps the explorer to gradually reflect more deeply, and of how the insights gained at the level of identity then shed new light on these reflections during the process of moving back 'down' from Identity to Environment. The chance to 'revisit' your earlier reflections on the way 'down' makes the process that much richer than if it was just one way.

The process is illustrated in Figure 2:

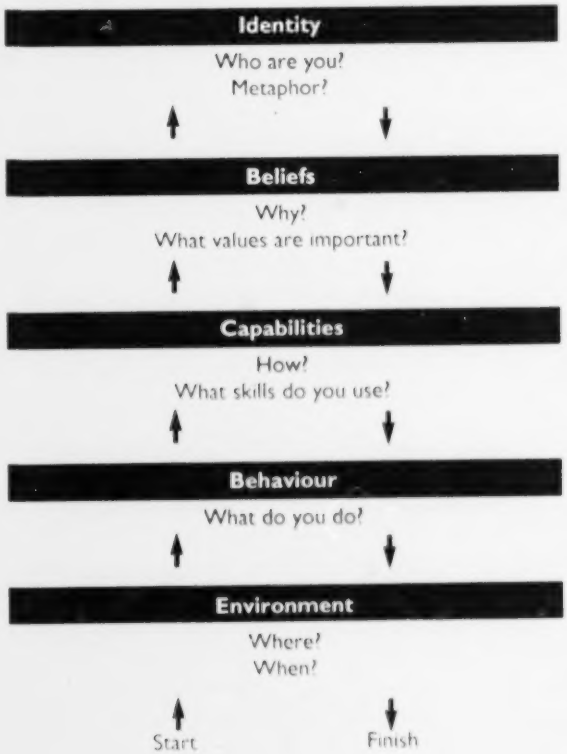

Fig 2 Logical level alignment process

Practicalities

A feature of the process that I haven't yet mentioned is the use of floor space to separate the levels. While the process can obviously be done sitting down, it can help the explorer to separate the levels in their mind if they actually walk through them. To make this clearer you can write the name of each level on a piece of paper and lay these out in a line. The explorer then steps onto the appropriate paper or space when they come to explore each level. Giving an external physical expression to the internal journey to and from Identity seems to make the process more vivid for most people.

I've used this technique on various in-service courses for teachers and have found that most of them react enthusiastically to this way of reflecting on aspects of their teaching. After demonstrating the process I get teachers to work in pairs as explorer and questioner. I avoid listening in on them, but make myself available to help if they get stuck. Before they start, I remind the questioners:

- to listen carefully to what the explorer says and recap what they say from time to time, using the explorer's own words;
- to rephrase a question if the explorer has difficulty answering it;
- to avoid giving advice or expressing their own opinion.

Problem areas

It may be that some participants find a topic problematical or choose to explore a problem area, and their beliefs and sense of identity in relation to this area may not be positive. In this case it can be helpful, after they have got to the Identity level and have expressed their sense of identity, to ask them who they would like to be in relation to the problem. Then ask them to imagine themselves with this new 'ideal' sense of identity (with, perhaps, a more positive metaphor), and then step into the Belief space, noticing how this changes their beliefs about themselves and the problem. As they continue down/out, new options may well spring to their mind and they may feel less 'stuck' than they did at first.

Follow-up and variations

Discussion of what came up during the activity may help participants to extend their reflections in comparison and contrast to others. Hearing someone else describe what they do or believe, for example, can help to clarify what you believe. However, I think it's important not to put any pressure on participants to make their reflections public.

Finally, here are some possible variations:

- Work in threes. The third person can take notes on what the explorer says and also help the questioner if they get stuck.
- The choice of topic can be left open and might not necessarily be to do with teaching. After going through the process you can discuss 'How is your swimming (for example) a metaphor for your teaching?'.
- Alternatively you can ask everyone to explore the same topic. This could be a good lead-in to input and a way of getting participants to share their experience, ideas and beliefs. E.g. 'Yourself as learner' as a lead-in to talking about study skills on a DTEFLA course. A possible follow-up here would be to get everyone to write brief comments about what they learned on cards and stick them on the board under the appropriate heading corresponding to one of the five levels.
- Once course participants are familiar with the process you could ask them to try it again in their own time, either with someone else or on their own. This could be a good way of preparing for an input session (e.g. 'Errors and correction'), as it helps participants to clarify their opinions and become aware of what they do in the classroom.

Thanks to Jim Kell for comments on an earlier draft of this article.

1 For more details see O'Connor, J. and Seymour J., 'Introducing Neuro-Linguistic Programming', (Thorsons, 1990).

2 Maingay, P. 'Observation for training, development or assessment?' In T. Duff, (ed.), 'Explorations in Teacher Training – Problems and Issues' (Longman, 1988).

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ADDENDUM

The course mentioned in the *Trainee Voices* column in Volume 11 Number 3 was an RSA/UCLES Cote course. The host institution was the British Council, Eastern Adriatic, Generale Zdanova, Belgrade. Bonnie Tsai was a trainer on the course which was managed by Sue Leather, a freelance consultant based in Cambridge.

Chaos Theory and The PDSA Cycle

by David King, UK

Abstract

Chaos theory may help to explain the unpredictable events which managers and teacher trainers routinely meet. The Plan Do Study Act cycle is a tool which can help managers and teacher trainers deal with this unpredictability. However the barriers to using this deceptively simple tool should not be underestimated.

Introduction

"It has become increasingly clear that both top-down and bottom-up strategies for educational reform fail. As the pressures for reform mount we must ask the question if a different more fundamental strategy is needed." (p187 Fullen)

The Introduction of Cheaper and Better Photocopier Leads to a Rise in Advertising Expenditure !

Let me tell you a story.

I work for a privately owned group of EFL schools and one of my jobs is as Director of the teacher training department. One of the courses that we run is the Cambridge CTEFLA. Recently, the head of the accountants department discovered that he could get cheaper, and better photocopiers from a new supplier. Therefore he arranged for these new and better photocopiers to be placed in each building to replace the existing ones. The photocopiers arrived, shiny and new and packed with exciting and useful features. In the Teacher Training department we were very pleased to have one of these wonderful new machines. The problem began when the machine ran out of toner, being a new and different type of machine we didn't have a reserve supply.

The trainees and trainers on the CTEFLA course were forced to use the photocopier in the Teaching department. This led to queues for the photocopier and to putting extra strain on this machine which of course started to breakdown leading to even longer queues of teachers, trainees and teacher trainers. This situation went on for a considerable length of time. The photocopier suppliers had trouble locating the toner. The machines were new and their warehouse first sent the wrong toner and then discovered that they didn't have any in stock. They would have to contact the manufacturer

The result of this being that the chain of cause and effect led to the teachers resenting the presence of the trainees. Unfortunately this frustration and resentment was emerging especially when the trainees were doing their

observations of the teachers' classes and trying to discuss what they have seen with the teachers. Approximately 20% of the trainees that come on our CTEFLA courses come because of recommendations from ex-trainees. A friendly and helpful atmosphere being frequently cited as a characteristic of the school. The decline in enjoyment and learning caused by the resentment would certainly have led to a drop in those recommendations and would have been followed by a rise in the expenditure on advertising so as to fill the courses.

Using the Chaos Theory Describe the Phenomena

I would say I have observed and participated in many such situations where decisions and consequent actions lead onwards to effects that were not predicted. This I would generalise is the experience of most managers and teacher trainers. So, I need to make sense of data such as detailed in the story of the new photocopiers.

What may help managers and teacher trainers to understand such phenomena is "Chaos Theory". Chaos theory makes various claims about complex dynamic systems such as the world that we live in.

- Firstly, that we can not predict what the exact effects of our decisions will be because everything is connected, directly or indirectly, and affects everything else.
- Secondly, that the world does not consist of a uniform randomness – patterns will emerge.

All aspects of life can be seen as parts of a dynamically complex system where everything is connected and affects, to some extent, everything else. The sheer number of the interactions makes exact prediction of future events in the real world an impossibility. This works against the view of Newtonian physics that anything can be analysed in isolation. " The basic idea of Western science is that you don't have to take into account the falling of a leaf on some planet in another galaxy when you re trying to account for the motion of a

billiard ball on a pool table on Earth. Very small influences can be neglected. There's a convergence in the way that things work, and arbitrary small influences don't blow up to have arbitrary large effects" p15ct However," In science as in life , it is well known that a chain of events can have point of crisis that could magnify small changes. But chaos means that such points were everywhere. They were pervasive." (p23 Gleick)

Chaos theory proposes that in the general sea of unpredictability "islands of structure" will appear. I take this to mean that though we can not predict what we may find, as we gather information about a situation, it may be that strong trends may emerge and that it is by looking for those trends and then working from an understanding of those trends that we can better manage change and achieve our aims.

"Chaos theory is attractive to educators because much of what happens in the life of a school just doesn't seem to fit the current frame of "what ought to be happening". Little change ever occurs as it is planned. The objective or goal may eventually be realised, but almost never in the predictable way in which it was designed. It may be time to set aside the assumptions about regularity and controllability in changing organisations. Perhaps the best chance that exists for transforming fundamental schooling traditions is to embrace irregularity as a norm, while looking for patterns that can be guided in a certain direction." (p7 Snyder)

It is necessary to avoid being to extreme when looking at unpredictability. Though you can not predict, to the minute, when you will arrive at work every day you can predict that you will arrive and that it will be, on most days, within a certain time frame. This I would term as "good enough prediction". Though you can not predict exactly what will happen, the approximation is usually good enough to be satisfactory.

Development the Mental Model

Our mental models or mental maps "are deeply ingrained assumptions, generalisations, or even pictures or images that influence how we understand the world and how we take action" (p8 Senge) This leads us to the interesting relationship between thought and language. Hayakawa see them as interdependently forming each other and quotes Anuerin Bevin, "It is inherent in our intellectual activity that we seek to imprison reality in our description of it. Soon, long before we realise it, it is we who become prisoners of the description." (p92 Hayakawa) Hayakawa also warns "To understand the symbolic process is to be able to use it to your advantage; not to understand it is to remain forever its victim" (p16 Hayakawa)

As a manager and teacher trainer I find that my mental maps have been dominated and shaped by machine metaphors. "The universe that Sir Isaac Newton described was a seductive place. As the great clock ticked, we grew smart and designed the age of machines..... we grew assured of the role of determinism and prediction"(p26 Wheatley)

"The machine imagery of the spheres was captured by organisations in an emphasis on structure and parts. Responsibilities have been organised into functions. People have been organised into roles. Page after page of organisational charts depict the workings of the machine: the number of pieces, what fits where, who the big pieces are." (P27 Wheatley) The machine metaphor fits well with a universe that is predictable. Even unpredictability can be seen in machine terms, malfunctioning or broken parts, be those broken parts people or organisational structures, lead to breakdowns.

Personally, I found it very difficult to switch to another form of metaphor. Eventually I realised that the metaphors that I need to describe the world when using the lens of chaos theory can be provided by the natural world. So I needed a metaphor from the natural world which would show a single cause that leads to lots of effects – effects which can be distant in time and space. My first thought was of what I would consider a common metaphor, "the manager's decision as a pebble thrown in a pool and the effects as the ever widening ripples". However I reject this on the basis that it separated me from the effects and I know that I am as much affected by the ripples as anyone else in an organisation.

So, now I am a fish. A fish in an ocean. The ripples caused by the decisions of myself and others spreading far and wide, leading to effects distant in time and space from the causes and as they interact with other ripples from other decisions the effects becoming more and more unpredictable.

The PDSA Cycle

The PDSA cycle or " Deming cycle guides us towards improvement" (p139 Neave) It is a management tool described by Walter Shewart in the 1939 and brought into common use by Deming. The letters stand for Plan Do Study Act. They are usually shown in a circle.

THE PDSA CYCLE

This tool is used as

- an action plan
- a planning tool

continued ►

As an action plan it shows that you need to deal with four stages; the Planning of the change, the Doing of the change, the Studying (also referred to as measuring) of the results of the change and then Acts that you will carry out based on study of how successful have been the changes.

As a planning tool it guides you to certain questions and actions beyond the usual who, where and how. It proposes that PDSA's are used in iterative cycles and for the first cycle managers use pilots "carried out on a small scale-large enough to gain useful information, but no larger than necessary in case things go wrong" (p142 Neave)

Your plans for the Study phase should not only include a collection of data at the end of a project or process, there should also be in-process measurement. "Fundamental in Deming's and some others teachings of the old was the change of emphasis from sorting finished product by inspection, i.e. downstream action on output, to upstream action on processes, i.e. to improvement of efficiency and quality so that end inspection is less necessary" (p203 Neave). Deming taught that end inspection was too late. The proposed chaotic nature of complex dynamic systems also says that end inspection will be too late to deal with the problems of unpredictability and too late to gain advantage from the "islands of structure " or strong trends which in-process measurement may detect.

An example of an in process measurement is the weekly feedback session on the CTEFLA course, which picked up the trainees reactions to the teachers following the arrival of the new photocopiers. Because the feedback was being collected and considered on a weekly basis the Teacher Training department were able to react quickly and take steps to avoid the problem becoming serious. Quality improvement, at least in the version proposed by Deming, claims to lower cost. The use of pilots and in-process measurement have provided evidence that this claim is true.

PDSA's can be run at all levels of activity, they can also be used when building space ships and other projects on a huge scale. Yet the value of the PDSA tool is optimised when all staff understand all work can be viewed as processes which can be improved and that the PDSA method can be used for all activities, no matter how small. To make the point with an extreme example, the process of making a cup of tea can be seen as an opportunity to use the PDSA method while on a lower level even the sub-process of putting sugar into the tea can involve an end measurement of how sugary it tastes and in-process studies of the size and depth of the teaspoon, the volume of the cup and the depth of the liquid. PDSA's can be infinitely "nested inside of each other" each PDSA helping to improve the quality of the product and achieve the aim of the project.

The optimal use of in-process measurement demands the involvement of all staff. Chaos theory points out " it is well known that a chain of events can have a point of crisis that could magnify small changes. But chaos meant that such points were everywhere." (p 23 Gleick). The manager and teacher trainer needs in-process measurements running on his or her own work processes and also the understanding and involvement of all the staff. This involvement of all the staff in the in-process measurement of their work processes is one of the crucial factors in the growth of continuous quality improvement.

The Barriers to Learning

The collection of information and the concepts that underlie the collection of information in an organisation can be seen as aspects of what Senge referred to as "the learning organisation". Yet; "It is no accident that most organisations learn poorly. The way that they are designed and managed, the way peoples jobs are defined and most importantly the way that we have been taught to think and interact (not only in organisations but more broadly) create fundamental learning difficulties" (p18 Senge)

As well as the aforementioned problem of developing new mental models I would add;

1. Organisational culture

PDSA was neatly described by one participant when I first gave this paper as a "think do, think do cycle" If you are working with in a culture that requires lots of "Do" and not much "think". Then it will be difficult to use PDSA as a method.

Also, if the power to change and improve the processes of work is not in the hands of those doing the work it can be very frustrating and will often seem pointless for them to collect and study the data produced by their own work processes.

2. Ego investment

For many managers and teacher trainers the concept of the Study phase of PDSA is easy to accept as a theory but becomes difficult to carry out in practice. Studying the changes they themselves are managing may mean that they find evidence that they made decisions which were wrong. For many managers is difficult to accept that they should be working to find evidence that they were wrong, especially if they see themselves in the role of "controlling", "driving" or "pushing" their organisations and the loss of "face" would be, according to their mental model, dangerous to this assumed role of a manager and teacher trainer.

3. Habit

It is difficult to break habits and to build new ones. Reflection upon my own experience and of other mangers that I have observed and mentored leads me to see this as a major and for me an unexpected obstacle. Logic and intellect may lead us in one direction – habits built up over years are often more powerful and it may take a long and sustained effort to build – or grow – new one.

Conclusion

The manager, and I include teachers as co-managers in the learning and teaching environment, have three new interdependent and often overlapping features they might to incorporate into their mental models; "quality improvement", "the learning organisation" and "the new science" including chaos theory. At the beginning of this paper I quoted Fullen, I will return to him for an end quote. "The purpose of the partnership is to establishment of approaches to teacher development at all stages of the teaching continuum, by transforming schools, districts and faculties of education to environments for continuous learning" (p187 Fullen).

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This article was written while I was Director of Teacher Training for The Frances King School of English and is reprinted, with permission from 'ETL Management' No20 April 1996. I am now a freelance management consultant and trainer. I can be contacted at;

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Of special relevance or interest to teacher trainers are:

Education, assessment and society, a sociological analysis by Patricis Broadfoot (1996) Open University Press ISBN 0-335-19601-2. This book discusses the roles played by assessment in modern education systems, the evolution of different assessment arrangements in different countries (England and France) and the reasons for these. Small print and scholarly. A few scattered references to assessment and teachers.

Opening the classroom door by John Loughran & Jeff Northfield (1996) Falmer Press ISBN 0-7507-0591. A teacher educator and researcher went back to the classroom for a year to teach secondary school maths and science and kept a daily journal. Students were also interviewed, classes observed and students did some writing tasks too. The resultant material is divided into 3 sections- a teacher's perspective, the students' perspective and implications and reflections.

A grammar of speech by David Brazil (1995) OUP ISBN 0-19-437-193X In the describing English language series and using authentic data this book studies the step by step manner in which speakers seem to assemble discourse and comes up with a way of describing and analysing this. The principles underpinning this model and its implications for language teaching and learning are discussed.

Coping with difficult bosses by Robert Bramson (1992) Nicholas Brealey Pubs. ISBN 1-85-788-028-5. Attractive title! If you work for someone difficult and don't want to quit, buckle under or explode, then the ideas in this book will help. Dip in to discover whether your problem is covered in chapters on bosses that attack and degrade, dodge, hold the reins too tightly, know it all or are offensive or unscrupulous. The coping strategies represent the perspectives, methods and techniques that proved effective over roughly a decade of consultancy by the author on impossible managers. I couldn't put the book down!

The emotional experience of learning and teaching by I Salzberger-Wittenberg et al (1993) Routledge. ISBN 0-415-05900-3. Based on work done with groups of teachers attending the Tavistock Clinic, London, this book demonstrates how insights derived from psychoanalysis can heighten the understanding of the learning relationship, help teachers to bear stressful situations and find deeper

satisfaction in their role as educators. Small print. Divided into short chunks. Useful as background reading on, for example, why the beginnings of a course can be stressful, different ways to look at teachers, teacher fears etc.

The Zen of groups by D. Hunter et al (1995) Gower ISBN 0-566-07489-3. Written for anyone in a community, work, education or recreation group of up to about 30 members. Large print. Starts from absolute basics. 95 recipes for warming up, ending, team building. Ends with short bibliography.

75 ways to liven up your training by Martin Ovridge (1996) Gower. ISBN 0-566-07774-4 (Hb) Recipes for group leaders on icebreaking, team working, large groups, individuals and paired exercises, creative problem solving and closing. All ideas clearly explained and needing little preparation and few materials. Wait for the paperback?

Longman Essential Activator Longman pubs. (1997) ISBN 0-582-247 42-X. The Longman Activator production dictionary is one of the best ways for serious English language students to expand their vocabulary. The only thing wrong with it from a students' point of view, is that it's heavy to carry around. This new 'essential' version is much lighter, at the cost, obviously, of cutting down massively on the number of words it contains. To compensate, the book contains some new user-friendly features such as topic related word banks, some functional/grammatical pages and some information on common mistakes. If I were a student, I'd carry this one in my bag and keep the bigger original on my desk at home.

Very young learners by V.Reilly and S.Ward (1997) OUP ISBN 0-19-437 209-X. To help those drafted in to teach children with a developmental age of roughly 3-6, there is preliminary discussion of use of mother tongue, learner characteristics and child development, syllabus and lesson planning, and activity types, followed by ideas that gradually train you how to use the classroom, draw, make things and introduce English in fun ways! Very helpful.

Creating stories with children by Andrew Wright (1997) OUP ISBN 0-19-437204-9. This is the companion book to 'storytelling with children' by the same author and publisher. From warm-up activities to retelling of familiar stories to fully fledged independent creations, here are 70+ ideas for children of about 10 with about a year of English. Useful if you want to learn more about story making and telling yourself.

Activity Box by Jean Greenwood (1997) CUP ISBN 0-521-498708. Spiral bound, A4, resource book for teachers of 11-14 year olds. Written for those new to teaching or to this age range. 55 activities ranging from Noughts and Crosses (for clusters) to hour long projects, designed to supplement a course book. Photocopiable pages.

Describing language by D.Graddol et al, 2nd addition (1995) OUP ISBN 0-335-19315-3. A practical textbook for language and social science students requiring a basic conceptual framework and technical language so they can discuss language and needing ways to analyse real data such as classroom interactions or counselling sessions. Includes accessible introductions to Chomsky and Halliday.

Managing curricular innovation by Numa Markee (1997) CUP ISBN 0-521-555 248. An overview of the theory and practice of instituting curricular change in language education programmes. Taking six examples such as the notional-functional syllabus and the natural approach, a framework is posited and applied to a major curriculum change at a U.S. university. From this come 9 principles for language teaching professionals to bear in mind when managing their own innovation. Many readers will find the book confirms their practice and intuitions rather than breaking totally new ground.

The good mentor guide by Val Brooks and Pat Sikes (1997) OUP ISBN 0-335-19758-2. Written to support school teachers in the UK called upon to adopt the role of mentor and to provide professional and subject guidance and supervision for student teachers. It discusses what good mentoring practices look like, different models of how to manage mentoring and assessment. Contains real quotes and case studies. Useful for beginner and more experienced mentors.

Becoming a teacher by Eds. J. Dillon and M.Maguire (1997) Open University Press ISBN 0-335-198236. Written for newly qualified and pre-service secondary school teachers in the UK, this book contains background on UK educational policy and practice and also very short sections on adolescence, class management, assessment and IT.

Finding a voice while learning to teach Eds. D Featherstone et al (1997) Falmer Press ISBN 0-7507-0648-1. Mostly made up of anonymous contributions by members of a teacher education programme (94-96), operated jointly by Waterloo and Queens universities Canada, who write about their work, beginnings, crises, and development. The concept of "voice" is big in the North Americas so there is inevitably a slight haze of jargon to peer through. Nonetheless, worthwhile.

Conducting tracer studies in adult language and literacy programs by B Chapman and S Fisher (1995) National Centre for English Language Teaching and Research ISBN 1-86408-031-0. Being sensitive to clients/students leads many institutions to conduct needs analyses before and at the start of courses. Tracer studies chart students after they leave a course enabling you to gain feedback on the efficacy of a course and thus to fine tune it. This slim booklet shows how to do a tracer study, gives an example of a completed tracer study report and supplies letters and survey forms adaptable for your setting.

500 tips for research students by Sally Brown et al (1995) Kogan Page ISBN 0-7494-1767-6. Contains 52 separate lists of practical tips under headings such as dealing with your supervisor, organising your time, literature searches, preparing for your viva, getting going on teaching, writing your C.V. Although written for those with an academic career in mind, there are tips useful for essay writers, teachers, supervisors, conference attenders, job interviewees

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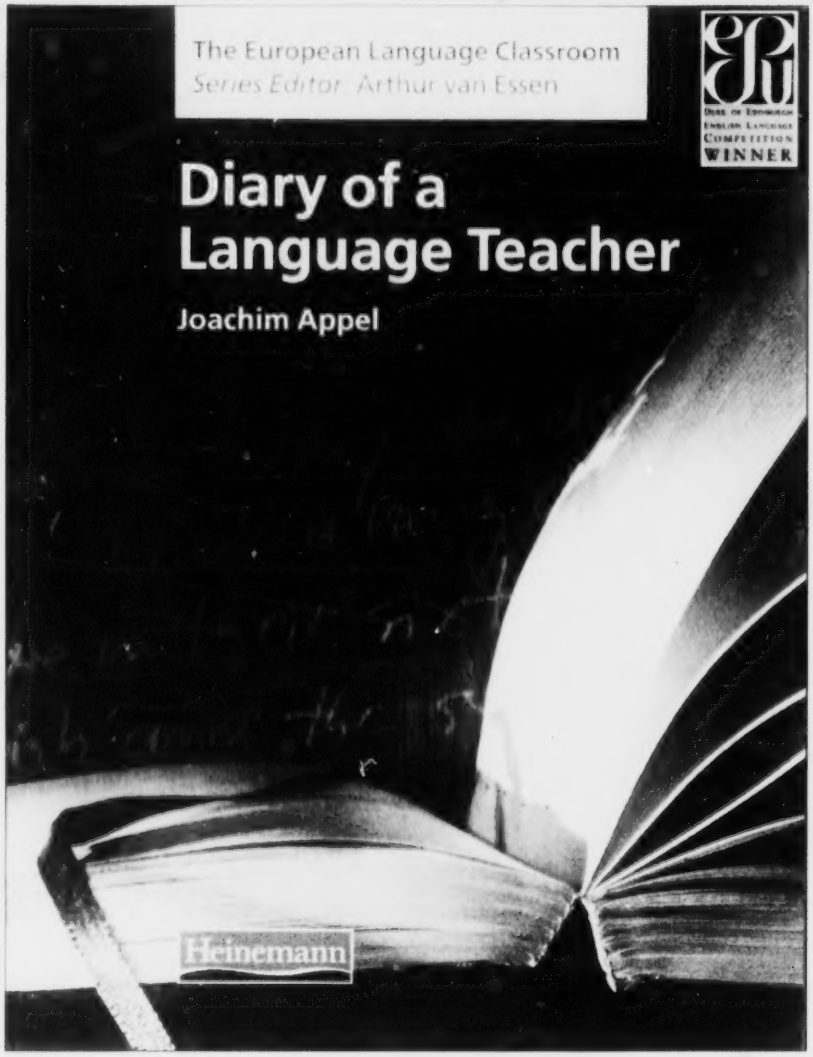
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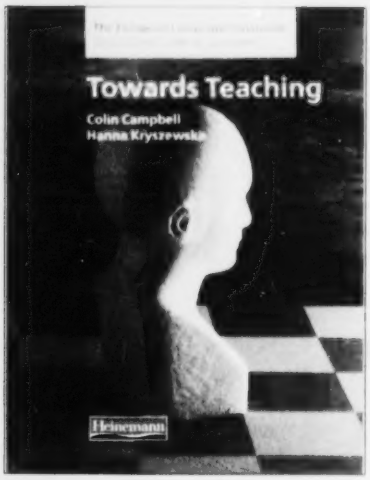

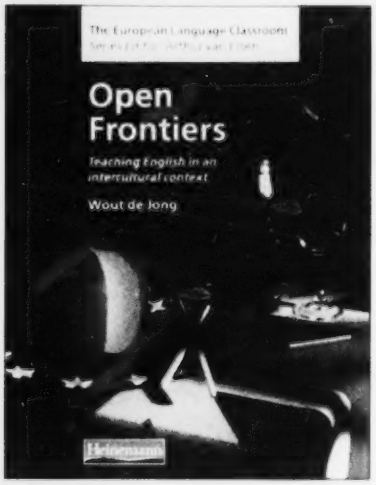

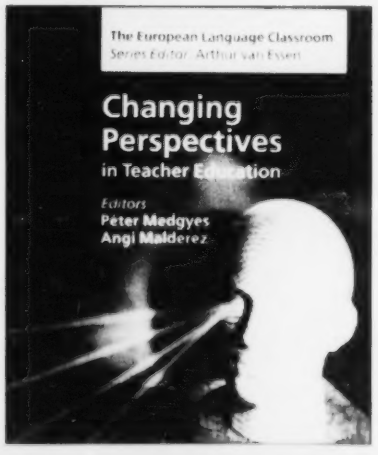

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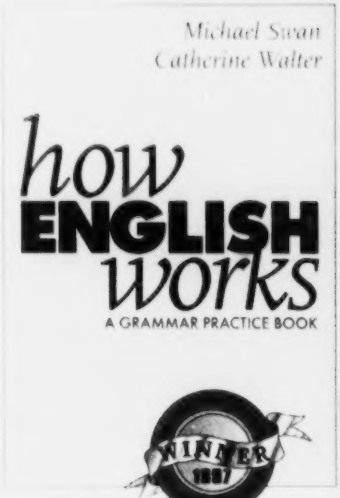

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Editorial

Dear Everyone,

Welcome to the summer issue 1998!

Usually on this page in the journal I give an introduction to the articles in the issue, explaining which ones are linked by theme, which written by newcomers to the field and which fall into particular series. This time, as we're rather squeezed for space, I've decided to cut back on my words so as to make room for more of other people's.

Please keep sending in your contributions and the names of any friends you think might like to join us!

Enjoy the journal!

Tessa Woodward

Editor

Letter

I have just received the first Teacher Trainer of the year, and have had great fun with the adaptation of Pope (See Richard Watson Todd page 11, Vol. 12/1). It really reminded me how much we are influenced by rhyme and rhythm and doggerel. One of the poems I cannot forget (I don't like it, but I can't forget it) is The Song of Hiawatha. I just couldn't resist seeing if I could use it to express a humorous view on the never ending EFL training circuit. So here it is, just for fun.

By the shores of TESOL, TEFLA
Thanks to training across borders,
Stood a group of hopeful trainees,
Soon to be quite anxious trainees
And behind them rose the tutors,
Rose the first of many spectres,
Rose the first of several FOTPAS,
Fraught with nerves and self-appraisal
Trainees need good self-appraisal
All sorts depend on self-appraisal.

And with time they made some lessons.
Hoped to please their teacher trainers.
Made them with the care side inside,
Made them with the structure outside.
Had to get the timing right side
Had to get the balance up side
Had to get the lesson pass side
All to get the trainee job side.

They are now successful teachers.
Quite the envy of all mentors
They will ne'er forget their training
Even though it shook them sorely.
And they've moved a little nearer
To the Masters Programme now.
On to mastery of all TESOL.
Alack, poor trainees! What comes now?

With more than abject apologies to that long fellow.

Jean Rudiger, Switzerland.

Grammar in M.A. TESOL Programs: A Redefinition[1]

by A. J. Meier, University of Northern Iowa, USA

Introduction

This article will outline a grammar course for M.A. TESOL programs that is motivated by a need for redefining grammar in order to be in better accord with the goals of communicative competence. This redefinition, however, is not intended to entail an analysis of the various definitions of pedagogical grammars as opposed to teaching grammars as opposed to reference grammars as opposed to functional grammars as opposed to traditional grammars as opposed to theoretical or linguistic grammars. Rather than becoming entangled in a terminological jungle of definitions, I would like to present suggestions for a grammar course within TESOL programs based on the following three assumptions:

1. The goal of communicative competence, whether adhered to or merely espoused, is one that will confront many future EFL/ESL teachers upon assuming a teaching position. (Institutions or countries for which this does not presently hold true will increasingly turn in this direction as face-to-face cross-cultural interaction increases.)
2. The goal of communicative competence points to a definition of grammar that marries form and function (thereby including situationalized language use) and encompasses spoken as well as written language.
3. If this marriage is to take place in ESL/EFL classrooms, teacher education likewise needs to address this union.

The above three assumptions may seem fairly banal. In fact, a student in my "Problems of English Grammar" class, upon reading Celce-Murcia's (1990) article entitled "Discourse Analysis and Grammar Instruction," which argued for attention to both form and function in context, commented that the connection between form and function seemed so "logical" that she did not understand why anyone need bother to write an article arguing for it. The student who offered this comment was a non-TESOL graduate student (who mysteriously got routed into the class). The TESOL students in the class, however, who have likely had more experience with second and foreign language learning and/or teaching, did not see the same banality in Celce-Murcia's article, but reacted very enthusiastically, which was, of course, more in line with my intention as the instructor, and, I assume, with Celce-Murcia's as well. But, indeed, why did they not find it banal? It seems obvious, does it not, that if one desires to communicate – orally, in writing, or both – that form alone will fall short; function/context need also be addressed. I believe the answer lies in the fact that a form-function connection (much in the sense of a discourse grammar) does not exist as a comprehensive systematic description, nor perhaps ever can. This has interrelated consequences that create and compound teaching anxiety.

First, it is probable that the majority of TESOL students have not themselves experienced an approach that merges form and function; many who have had exposure to function have experienced it only as brief or simplistic additive capsules tagged onto a form-focussed, sentence-level approach. This lack of experience likely reflects the content of many textbooks, both past and present, leading to a second cause of anxiety, namely, the lack of a ready-made basis for a lesson plan, and a concomitant lack of direction for an approach to execute a form-function union, one that following Carter and McCarthy (1995) would do better with Illustration-Interaction-Induction (i.e., the three I's) than with the traditional three P's (i.e., Presentation-Practice-Production). Third, and most crucial to this article, teacher education programs in ESL/EFL often do not address the form-function union in a way that is relevant to future teaching demands. What often comes to mind when the topic of grammar classes in M.A. TESOL programs arises is the focus embodied in many current grammar textbooks, namely, descriptive accounts of sentence grammar, often involving a grammatical analysis using phrase structure with more or less emphasis on the metalanguage of parts of speech, clause types, and sentence structure (see e.g., Baker 1989; Fabb, 1994; Kaplan 1989/1995; Kolln, 1982; Silva, 1995; Thomas 1993). Systematic accounts of the structure of English provided by such texts can easily be viewed as preferable to the "messy picture" presented by a more or less "bits-and-pieces" collection of research into discovering patterns of form and function in context, which do not readily qualify as facts as instructors and students might expect or desire.

Goals, readings, and activities

This section will suggest course goals, readings, and activities, in outlining a way to take the "messy picture" painted by the marriage of form and function and forge it into a grammar class that is relevant to TESOL students. In so doing, it should be emphasized that form (including parts of speech vocabulary) is not being thrown out with the bathwater, so to speak, but rather assumes an instrumental role (a means) as opposed to being the major focus (the end). In other words, I am advocating a relatively inclusive coverage that is often called for when considering students' background knowledge and goals. Many M.A. TESOL programs have a diverse enrollment: diverse in nationality and thus in amount of English grammar background, diverse as regards graduate or undergraduate status, diverse in age, teaching experience and type of teaching experience, and diverse in future teaching positions or further academic degrees, some known, some unknown. This diversity was highlighted by a more or less unsophisticated pre-test recently administered to my "Problems of English Grammar" class. The results showed that of 34 students (12 having an L1 other than English), 8 could not correctly transform an active voice sentence to passive voice and 11 could do only one of three correctly. (Only 1 of these 19 was an international student.) Those who transformed all the sentences correctly were international students. Another section asked for examples of relative clauses; 22 of 34 could not create a sentence with a relative clause. Again, those who correctly produced two or three were international students. A similar pattern emerged for the identification of adverbs and adjectives, and the identification of verb types, with the undergraduates being the weakest. Although one may well question the importance of the above abilities, the results do reveal very different levels of knowledge, if only of the vocabulary needed to discuss grammatical structure.

It would, of course, be a fine thing to have the luxury of three or four courses that would meet all needs and wants. However, the reality of most programs is probably one course or set of lectures with 'grammar' or 'structure' in the title (see Wagner, 1995). Table 1 below provides course goals for such a grammar course, assuming a goal of communicative competence and a heterogeneous group.2 These goals can be summarized with the following key words: form, function, usage, and application. Important in these goals is the focus on the students' experiences in discovery processes rather than on a comprehensive coverage of grammatical structures.

Table 1 Course goals

1) Familiarize students with different approaches to the study and description of grammar
2) Familiarize students with major grammatical patterns and the terminology used to describe them.
3) Engage students in independent investigation of grammatical structures and their application (ESL/EFL pedagogy): form function usage (observation of authentic discourse) textbook critique lesson suggestions
NOTE: This course is not intended to provide a comprehensive investigation of English grammar. Instead, the goal is to examine a sampling of structures with a view towards developing experience in the processes involved in independent investigation and application.

Two types of texts are suggested for the course: a grammar text, and an (intermediate level) ESL/EFL textbook. The grammar text should contribute to the course goals by including the following aspects: grammatical form, meaning and discourse function, and application to ESL/EFL pedagogy. The aspect of grammatical form should provide the basics for grammar novices, with a depiction incorporating recent linguistic developments (e.g., an accessible formalism drawing upon Government and Binding Theory) for those who are no longer novices (see e.g., Jacobs, 1995). The aspect of form is intended to provide students with the tools needed to enhance their own discovery processes as they do independent readings and consult other grammars and ESL/EFL textbooks. Although it is likely that the aspects of function and application will receive less attention than form in a grammar text, these aspects can receive further focus in assignments from an ESL/EFL textbook that contains a variety of activities, including functional descriptions and tasks as well as sentence-level exercises (see e.g., Bland, 1996; Thewlis, 1993). The use of an ESL/EFL text imparts relevance to the course, providing a venue for pedagogical application, contributes a comparative source of grammatical presentation, and gives students without teaching experience a familiarity with at least one ESL/EFL textbook.

continued

Assigned readings and exercises from the ESL/EFL text can be matched with the grammar text according to topic. Answers to assigned exercises and evaluations of activities in the ESL/EFL textbook can be compared with those of other students in the class and discussed. By assuming the role of learner in completing textbook exercises, the students develop an awareness of the importance of context, the difficulties posed by assuming only one correct answer, and the limitations of sentence-level, fill-in-the-blank items. Additional readings round out the coverage of the selected areas of investigation by exposing students to current research (e.g., Bardovi-Harlig & Reynolds, 1995; Carter & McCarthy, 1995; Dagut, 1985; Haegeman, 1989; Pica, 1983; Riddle, 1986), most of which focuses on meaning and discourse function.

Some of these additional readings provide the basis for three introductory issues deemed valuable for the course in terms of providing a general "attitudinal framework," if you will, for the subsequent treatment of specific grammatical aspects. These issues (perhaps constituting the initial 9 hours of the course) include the following:

a) the meanings of 'grammar' and 'grammaticality' (see Westney, 1994; Tomlin, 1994)
b) the nature of grammar rules (see Westney, 1994); differences between spoken and written discourse, and observations of authentic speech (see Chafe, 1985; McCarthy & Carter, 1995; Pica, 1983)
c) discourse grammar (see Carter & McCarthy, 1995; Celce-Murcia, 1990; McCarthy, 1995)

An additional important aspect of the class involves relatively independent "discovery work" by the students in the form of frequently assigned library research, which entails a written summary of information found in other (3 or 4) grammar books regarding a particular grammatical feature (as regards both approach and description) as compared to the one or two ESL/EFL textbooks. Placing a selection of books on reserve (e.g., Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman, 1983; Greenbaum, 1996; Leech & Svartvik, 1975; Quirk, 1985) can facilitate and somewhat direct this research. This comparative research can also be varied by asking students to consult ESL/EFL textbooks rather than grammar books. This library research forms the basis for critical class discussion as students form pairs to compare their findings and then share comments with the entire class.

Final project

The culmination of the class entails an in-class presentation of independent research on a particular aspect of grammar (e.g., cohesion, ellipsis, past perfect, relative clauses, reporting verbs, will vs. going to, modals) and an annotated bibliography relating to the topic. A collection of authentic data and the comparison thereof with descriptions of the particular aspect in the literature and in ESL/EFL textbooks further enhances the reality of situationalized language use and encourages students to extend their view of grammar to a discourse level as they seek patterns of usage above the sentence level. The content of the research and in-class presentation thus mirrors the course goals and content (form-function-usage-application); importantly, therefore, the research and presentations are, to a large extent, modelled in class. Table 2 outlines the in-class presentation project.

Table 2 In-class presentation project guidelines

The Project will consist of the following:
A) The identification of an aspect of English grammar. This should include a justification for its study (i.e. what is the "problem?"). This problem generally will involve (discourse) function/appropriate usage.
B) A synthesis (not a grocery list!) of descriptions of the grammatical area based on various grammars (e.g., reference grammars, teaching grammars). This should culminate in a hypothesis (or hypotheses) concerning the area.
C) Investigation of usage through the collection of authentic data and a comparison with (B). The data can be spoken (e.g., taped talk shows) or written (newspapers, novels, academic writing).
D) A survey and critique of the presentation and practice of the area in three EFL/ESL textbooks, comparing this to (B) and (C).
E) Discussion of types of activities you would recommend for a given group of EFL/ESL students. This may involve the class in an activity.

The course concludes with a brief comparison of grammatical differences between American English (AE) and British English (BE), and with an analysis of observed learner errors (their own or others') that the students collect throughout the course, an analysis which is intended to draw together the semester's work in a different mode of application. These learner errors consist of both spoken and written speech, in context, relating to the areas covered in class.

Conclusion

A grammar text coupled with a "function-oriented" textbook, juxtaposed with library research and current relevant articles as well as with observation of authentic data represents an attempt to develop an awareness of the need to move beyond the isolated sentence and engage students in developing ways to explore the relationship between form and function that can be applied to ESL/EFL pedagogy.

Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank the editor for her comments and advice.

Notes

1 This article is a revised and expanded version of a paper presented at the 1997 TESOL Convention in Orlando, Florida.

2 This class is not viewed as a methodology class, that is, it is envisioned as existing in a program that includes at least one other class focusing on practical methodology.

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SESSION REPORT:

Fear and the Classroom: teacher development and teacher training

by Jenny Leonard, UK

What is it that makes us, as teachers, nervous? How do our nerves affect our teaching? Can these difficult and uncomfortable feelings be turned to good account?

Having asked myself these questions frequently during bouts of teaching nerves, I decided to discuss them with colleagues in an in-service workshop; I wanted to address these issues in my own work, but I had also gathered, through informal canvassing, that nerves are not necessarily diminished by experience. It seemed that I was not alone, and thought that it might be more productive to investigate this symptom than to suppress or ignore it.

A mixed group of native and non-native speaker teachers attended the session. We began with a guided visualisation, re-creating a fear-filled walk down the corridor towards the classroom, and then talked about what monster lurked for each of us behind that door. The answers varied: being observed by peers or management; hostile students; an unprepared lesson; an unfamiliar course or level; students intent on challenging the teacher (this last was a common fear among non-native teachers). Behind this mixture though, there seemed to be some common threads, so we discussed the more general personal fears underlying these specific situations.

A new list emerged: a fear of losing face; of losing control (over the lesson, the students, the materials or oneself); of not knowing, and being seen not to know. These feelings would be important only to our inner selves if they had no effect on our teaching, but they inevitably do. Teaching is not - and shouldn't be - a job where we can leave our feelings out of the equation. So we went on to talk about how our nerves affected our classes, beginning with the physical - dropping things, talking too fast or too much, a strangulated, high-pitched voice. The less noticeable and more insidious - sometimes subconscious - effects that were mentioned were sticking to the tried and tested, curtailing activities that weren't an immediate success, and rushing from activity to activity, hoping to cover nerves in aflurry of movement.

Finally I gave some input - ideally this would be elicited from the group, but time had run short - suggesting that nerves are best addressed rather than suppressed, and that being aware of some of the bad effects that fear can have on our teaching is the only way to obviate them. As trainers we tell trainees that the lessons which go wrong can be more useful to their development than those that go smoothly. Could the same not apply to us, when we feel a lesson go pear-shaped through our nervousness?

As a teacher development workshop this session can be a good safety-valve. Hard-pressed teachers are overwhelmed with seminars, articles and conference talks on new approaches and ideas on new approaches and ideas, but seldom get the opportunity for a bit of constructive breast-beating. Running "Current Trends" (methodology refresher) courses at International House, I used to get distressed at how sessions on bright new ideas would be hi-jacked into a group moan. This wasn't the idea at all, I'd worry, as the teachers rumbled on about difficult students, uncomprehending managements, self-serving bureaucrats, etc. Finally I capitulated to the inevitable and instituted a special slot on the course for expressing all our negative feelings about the job . We emerged from this session feeling vastly more cheerful . . . so perhaps among all the progress and self-improvement there is also a need to allow for worry and self-doubt, and to feel that we are not alone in sometimes feeling inadequate, and not up to the demands made upon us in this most demanding of jobs.

I used a shortened, more practical version of this with trainees on short pre-service courses, before they embarked on their first long lessons. Here we investigated the Worst Case Scenario behind their pre-teaching practice nerves: is it students leaving the room in droves? The tape recorder exploding? Totally forgetting their lesson plans? Then we went through these fears, sorting the possible from the paranoid and suggesting strategies for coping with the likely ones - having the tapescript on hand in case of technical problems, built-in student activity slots giving time to re-assemble a lesson plan in disarray, and so on. We made a list of what to do and not do before and during a lesson if nerves strike, i.e. don't re-vamp your lesson plan at the last moment or have panicky consultations with other members of the group, do slow down, don't let your nerves make you gabble or skip bits of your plan.

Finally we talked about how a confident teacher does not necessarily equal a good one (a common misapprehension of inexperienced trainees), and how it is possible to teach effectively through nerves; how this is indeed good practice for their future careers, when they will have to carry on teaching through all sorts of personal crises. Trainees can get the idea that there is a sort of Platonic ideal of a lesson which they know they could give if they hadn't slept badly/had their bicycle stolen/had only three students in the class etc.. It is worth pointing out that being able to teach well enough under these circumstances and the resultant nerves is what makes maybe not a brilliant teacher but, better than that, an eminently employable one.

At this point I remind them, and myself, that Sarah Bernhardt was still a marvellous actress despite the fact that she was sick every night before going on stage. Perhaps - as one participant in the workshop said - we should be thankful for our nerves, since they show us that we still care about our work.

Workshop Report: Peace in The Gulf

For some trainers, the idea that one might work quietly and self-sufficiently might seem too good to be true – no more meetings and conferences eating into the weekend; no more squabbles over language 'analysis' vs 'awareness'. But for trainers in the Arabian Gulf, mostly working on the pre-service Certificate in English Language Teaching to Adults (CELTA), this quiet self-sufficiency had finally added up to professional isolation. That is until the recent British Council Gulf Teacher Training Workshop (no comfortable acronym available here).

The first two-day workshop was at The British Council, Bahrain, in November 1997. Fifteen participants blew into town from nine British Council training centres across the Middle East – Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar and Oman. Lynette Murphy O'Dwyer, Head of the Cambridge Integrated Language Teaching Schemes in Britain, led the opening session on the future direction of the Certificate and Diploma courses. The agenda included:

CELTA: the first year – a chance to air feelings of insecurity about syllabus changes, a session on alternative teaching practice schedules to give trainees a more realistic experience of the teaching world, different methods of feedback, trainer-training, possible ways of kicking the verb habit in language analysis programmes, Middle East marketing, and local needs courses (how many of you must, by royal edict, organise women only courses with women only tutors and moderators?), and a sessions and materials souq for the sharing of same. Informal get-togethers at the end of each day were also important since, out of it all – and reflected in the final session's action plan – came a sense of being, at last, more professionally connected. Some items from the action plan: to establish a working e-mail directory and quarterly newsletter, to implement a trainers' and courses' audit leading to a directory of personnel/courses in the Middle East, to set up a joint CILTS/British Council project on local training needs.

The workshop is to be an annual event, open to non-Council training centres as well. The next workshop will be held in Muscat in November 1998. For more information please contact:

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The British Council DTO
PO Box 73 Post /code 115
Medinet As-Sultan Qaboos
Sultanate of Oman

P.S.We thought that other trainers in 'out-of-the-way' localities might see the benefits to be had from regional workshops like ours.

The Good Teacher Trainer

by Simon Borg, Dunedin, New Zealand

Introduction

As trainers, we have all got our ideas of what a 'good' trainer should be like. But what are our trainees' conceptions of the good trainer? Curious to find out, as part of a course evaluation exercise I asked a group of pre-service teacher trainees to describe the criteria which they felt good teacher trainers should satisfy. The feedback I obtained provided insight into the trainees' perceptions of the good trainer which had a powerful impact on my work. It also changed my understanding of the contributions trainees could make to my own development as a trainer. Here I want to discuss this feedback in order to illustrate the importance of trainee involvement in the evaluation of training and to show how trainees' subjective responses to the training they experience can provide trainers with opportunities for self-development.

The Criteria

I grouped the trainees' descriptions of the good trainer into three broad categories:

1 *Professional Qualities:* the majority of the trainees' comments referred to the repertoire of professional skills and qualities they said they expect a good teacher trainer to possess.

2 *Interpersonal Awareness:* well over half the trainees also reported that they felt a good teacher trainer was one who promoted positive trainee-trainee and trainer-trainee relationships.

3 *Training Content:* half the group felt that trainers should also be evaluated according to the content of their training sessions.

Before proceeding to discuss each of these categories, one point about the manner in which I classified the trainees' comments is worth making. Although most of the comments related quite clearly to one of the three categories I have just described, there were cases when it was difficult to decide whether a trainee's remark pertained to one category or another (Bolitho, 1991 encountered the same problem in classifying the qualities of the good teacher); for example, is enthusiasm a professional skill (i.e. can trainers develop the skill of appearing enthusiastic in order to motivate trainees?) or is it a personal quality (i.e. is the tendency to show enthusiasm innate?). I do not presume to provide any solutions to these dilemmas here; in such cases I relied on a subjective interpretation of the characteristic or quality, often made with reference to my own experience as a teacher and trainer. Thus I make no claims for the methodological rigor of my analysis in a positivist sense; rather, what I want to do here is to illustrate the reflective process through which I attempted to interpret

continued

in a personally meaningful way the comments my trainees made. I will now discuss these comments in terms of the three categories I listed above.

Professional Qualities

In describing the good teacher trainer, over 75% of the trainees referred to one or more of a variety of professional qualities which such a trainer should possess. The qualities they mentioned most frequently are listed in descending order below:

Professional qualities of good teacher trainers.

Well-prepared
Explain clearly
Use stimulus variation
Give concrete examples
Show enthusiasm
Use teaching aids
Make lessons interesting
Have good command of language
Maintain trainees' attention
Have good classroom control
Practise what they preach

The trainees' comments suggested that they view the good trainer as a model professional teacher. In other words, trainees expect to see in a trainer the same professional qualities which they themselves are being encouraged to develop during their training. The trainees were aware of the obviously incongruous position of trainers who fail to apply the principles they expect their trainees to embrace, i.e. who, in Britten's (1985:224) terms are not "reflexive" in their approach to teacher training. Also worth noting in this list is the insignificant extent to which knowledge-related qualities figured among the trainees' views of the good trainer; the items focus almost exclusively on skills which trainers are expected to possess and display. This does not mean that trainees are not interested in whether or not their trainers are knowledgeable (perhaps this is something trainees take for granted); it may imply, though, that displays of knowledge in trainers are much less important to trainees than an ability to communicate this knowledge clearly (a number of the qualities listed above are in fact related to the trainer's ability to communicate – e.g. using concrete examples and a good command of language).

Interpersonal Awareness

The trainees also commented on the value they see in the development of good relationships between the participants in the training process. Participants here refers to both the trainer and the trainees, and hence by participant relationships both trainer-trainee and trainee-trainee relationships are implied. Almost 65% of the trainees did in fact describe a good trainer in terms of behaviours and attitudes which promote positive relationships of this type. The most commonly reported of these behaviours are presented in rank order below.

How good trainers promote positive participant relationships

Encourage trainees to participate
Respect trainees
Enable trainees to interact
Act like a friend
Use humour
Interact with trainees
Develop good rapport with trainees
Are open to discussion
Are willing to be evaluated
Are ready to listen to all
Let trainees express ideas freely

Two interrelated sub-categories of trainer characteristics may be identified in this list; the first relates to trainer attitudes to participation and interaction; the second refers to the trainer's respect for trainees.

Participation and interaction

The trainees made it clear that they value a trainer who provides opportunities for participatory course work involving both trainer-trainee and trainee-trainee interaction. This implies a belief on the part of the trainees that such work makes training more effective, and trainee comments did in fact suggest a number of ways in which they feel this occurs. According to the trainees

- participatory work forces them to concentrate in a way that lectures do not, and this added attention enables them to learn more effectively.
- interactive work contributes to a more effective training process by promoting the interpersonal development of the trainees, and hence facilitating the exchange of ideas on which the training is based.
- the value of interactive work lies in the opportunity and encouragement it provides for all trainees to participate in and to contribute to their own learning. As one trainee put it, "discussions and group work help encourage timid ones like myself to pluck up courage and talk".

- good trainer-trainee relationships improve training effectiveness by motivating the trainees, making them look forward to training sessions and encouraging them to participate freely.

These comments point to the trainees' awareness of the value of interpersonal relationships in their training. This awareness is further illustrated by the comments in the following section, where the importance of the trainer's respect for the trainees is discussed.

Trainers' respect for trainees

A second sub-group of criteria from the list above indicate that my trainees perceived a good trainer as someone who respected them. The message the trainees wanted to convey here is that respecting trainees means acknowledging that they are mature individuals who possess and who need to express their own ideas, feelings, beliefs and attitudes. Their comments suggested that trainers can communicate their respect for trainees in a variety of ways: by allowing them to express their own opinions freely; by presenting information and ideas for them to discuss, rather than imposing knowledge upon them; by being ready to listen to the contributions they are willing to make; by asking them to evaluate training sessions; by treating them as adults. The trainees clearly felt that such an attitude on the part of the trainer has a beneficial effect on the training as it provides them with increased opportunities to make sense of what they learn, to present their own views with confidence in a non-threatening environment, to listen to the views of a variety of people (not just the trainer's), and to reflect and provide feedback on their own learning.

Training Content

The main issues which emerged from the trainees' comments on training content are summarised below. The trainees limited themselves to a description of the characteristics they felt training content should have rather than specifying any particular training topics they felt were especially worth covering on a teacher training course.

The training content of good teacher trainers

Can be put into practice
Relevant to teaching practice
Not theoretical
Useful
Varied

This list shows a concern on the part of the trainees for the practical applicability of the content of their training, in contrast to ideas which are "far fetched"; one trainee said "I would rather have [practical] lectures than much of the theoretical concepts which very often are of no use or too high above the realities of schools and classrooms". The trainees' comments also indicated they felt it was unjust for them to be sent out to teach (e.g. on teaching practice) without enough practical guidance on how to handle the task. Their comments here touch upon a basic dilemma in teacher training – the relationship between theory and practice – and give a clear indication of the trainees' desire to see clear links between training content and classroom teaching. Irrespective of the stance one takes concerning the place of theory and practice in teacher training, the major issue here seems to be that of enabling the trainees to perceive the relevance to the classroom of the content they cover during their training. The assumption on the part of the trainer that the training content is obviously relevant to the classroom situation has little meaning for the trainees; the good trainer, according to the trainees, will engage their interest and attention by making this relevance explicit. It is worth noting that although the trainees' position here seemed to stem from their awareness of the ultimately practical nature of teaching, there were strong performance-related motives at work too. Teaching practice is subject to assessment, and many trainees will feel that practicable training content gives them a better chance of performing satisfactorily when their teaching is assessed.

A Profile for the Good Teacher Trainer

On the basis of the most frequent comments made by the trainees in their feedback, I defined the following profile of the good trainer:

The Good Teacher Trainer

Encourages trainee participation
Enables trainees to perceive the relevance of training content to classroom practice
Communicates clearly
Is well prepared
Respects trainees
Interacts with trainees and enables trainees to interact with each other
Is friendly
Presents information in a variety of ways
Is enthusiastic

I use this profile as a point of reference in evaluating my own work, and I present it here in the belief that it can instigate other trainers to ask questions about their own practice, and arouse in them a curiosity to find out what their own trainees' conceptions of the good trainer are. Such feedback can have significant implications for trainers' work, a point I will now illustrate with reference to my own practice.

The Value of Trainee Feedback

I want to conclude this paper by discussing some of the ways in which an awareness of the profile of the good teacher trainer described above has influenced my own work. In doing so, my purpose is not to make claims for the normative value or otherwise of this profile – I would expect trainees from different educational contexts around the world to have different expectations of what their trainers should be like . Rather my aim here is to exemplify ways in which we can benefit from an awareness of our trainees' general feelings about their trainers.

continued

Reviewing one's approach to training

Firstly, an awareness of my trainees' perceptions of the good teacher trainer has helped me above all to understand my trainees better and to become more sensitive to their expectations and their needs. A direct result of this added insight is that I have had to think critically about my own work and to seek ways of making it more compatible with the views about training expressed by the trainees . I have also been able to make sense of training episodes which did not motivate the trainees as much as I had expected. For example, I was puzzled by the trainees' negative reaction to language awareness work; on the basis of the trainees' comments, I could see that this was probably because this work did not have a strong enough pedagogical focus and the trainees did not perceive its practical utility; thus in subsequent work of this kind I have made its classroom relevance more explicit. An awareness of my trainees' expectations and perceptions has thus enabled me to review my work.

Becoming aware of the trainees' potential as evaluators

A second important way in which the trainees' feedback has helped my own practice is that it has made me aware of the wealth of thought-provoking information which trainees, when given the chance, can provide about the training they experience. Many trainers ignore this potential and (possibly intentionally) limit the trainees' contribution to training evaluation by formulating objective evaluation sheets which involve the trainees in ticking or circling answers. Though useful, and certainly less threatening for the trainer, such forms of feedback often preclude the trainees from commenting at any length on issues perceived by them as relevant, and may limit the feedback to issues which the trainer alone thinks are important. My experience has shown that by providing the trainees with opportunities to write in a personally meaningful way about their training experiences, trainers can gain insight into their work which only the trainees, in their unique position as the recipients of training, can provide.

Developing good relationships with the trainees

I have also noted tnat trainees appreciate it when the trainer is interested in learning about their perceptions of his or her work; the respect for the trainees which the trainer communicates through such a gesture enables the development of more open trainer-trainee relationships. Trainees new to the idea of evaluating the trainer may at first be wary of expressing themselves freely, particularly if they are concerned about the effects their comments might have on the grade they receive for a course. But by stressing that their feedback should be a personal rather than an academic piece of writing, that frankness is more important than linguistic accuracy or stylistic elegance, and that the trainees can remain anonymous if they wish to, I have found that the trainees are always willing to comment on my work with them (see Borg, 1995 for more ideas on obtaining meaningful feedback from trainees). The knowledge that they can do so freely, and that their comments are taken into consideration, can lower the barriers which often separate the trainer and the trainees and open the way for the development of a more candid relationship between these two parties.

Conclusion

The point which emerges here, then, is that trainees are ideally placed to tell us what they think about their trainers, and that the information they have the potential to provide can play an important role in helping trainers to make sense of their work; it can also contribute significantly to the evaluative process which should be an intrinsic part of every trainer's practice.

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Borg, S. (1995) Qualitative Trainee Feedback.. IATEFL Teacher Trainer Special Interest Group Newsletter, 14/15: 10-14.

Britten, D. (1985) Teacher training in ELT. Language Teaching 18/3: 220-238.

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1 The data this paper is based on consisted of the written descriptions of the good teacher trainer provided by 74 trainees in their third year of a B.Ed. at the University of Malta with whom I did a credit on teaching English in the Primary School. I asked the trainees to write their descriptions individually and outside training time, and they were given one week in which to complete this task. I advised them to focus on providing a personal response to the question I had posed rather than on producing an academic piece of writing. To encourage trainees to express their responses openly, they were given the option of submitting their accounts anonymously. These accounts were generally 100-150 words long.

2 This last point in particular seemed to be quite a sore issue for a number of trainees who felt that trainers often treated them more like children than adults; to quote one of these trainees: "the most important of all [in good trainers] is the fact that they acknowledge us as university students who are attending university because we want to, that we are human beings and that they themselves were once in our place". This statement suggests that to respect trainees, trainers also need to be empathetic towards them.

3 The trainees who provided the data I have discussed here came from a fairly traditional educational background where teacher-centred work was the norm, examinations were highly competitive, 'theoretical' knowledge was valued, and teachers and learners occupied clearly defined giver-receiver roles.

4 Of course, this not does not mean that I feel obliged to adjust my work to every individual suggestion trainees make; however, I do attempt to shape my practice around recurrent comments, concerns, expectations, etc. with emerge from the feedback they provide

SESSION PLAN

The Challenge Beyond the Teacher's Desk:

Simulation and Role-Play for Training in Class Management

Gabriela Grigoroiu, University of Craiova, Romania
Fabiola Popescu, Teacher Trainer, Craiova, Romania

Class management represents a permanent challenge for any teacher, but perhaps especially the language teacher, because it involves human relationships and attitudes, and beliefs about learning and teaching. While conducting a lesson, the teacher has to be aware of a variety of pupil reactions and be ready to adapt herself and her lesson to the permanently changing situation in the class.

Peer-teaching

In both pre- and in-service training, we ourselves make regular use of a microteaching format with peer pupils in order to demonstrate and practise particular teaching skills. In spite of the loss of realism, we prefer peer-teaching to the use of real pupils for a number of reasons:

- It avoids the organisational problems of arranging for practice classes.
- Participants/trainees are more relaxed in peer-teaching than in teaching real pupils in front of their colleagues.
- Peer-pupils are more effective in giving feedback than real pupils.
- Playing the parts of "learner" and "teacher", participants become more aware of different types of learners in the classroom and different aspects of pupil-teacher interaction, which can help develop their professional thinking and performance.

Objectives and rationale

But simulating the language level and classroom behaviour of pupils of a given age is often hard to do realistically, particularly for pre-service trainees, and it is especially difficult when certain types of teaching skill are to be practised. This is the case, in our opinion, with a number of skills and sub-skills within the area of class management such as:

- correcting pupils' mistakes
- identifying pupils' difficulties and giving explanations
- maximising participation
- maintaining discipline.

In training sessions that focus on those areas we have found it helpful to use simulation and role-play to increase the effectiveness of peer-teaching. This paper describes two training procedures that we have found effective with both pre- and in-service trainees – first a simulated "case study" relating to a discipline problem, and secondly the use of role-cards for peer-pupils to practise the skill of maximising participation. The broader aims of both activities are:

- to raise trainees' awareness of the teacher's roles in the language class
- to help them cope with classroom realities
- to increase their self-confidence
- to guide them in organising and structuring their reflection on teaching
- to help them identify areas of self-development
- to encourage them to share experience and provide constructive advice and support to one another.

Learners and teachers come to the language classroom with their own personality characteristics, attitudes, previous experience and learning habits. All these individual differences affect how they feel about the subject, the roles of student and teacher, their own progress and the particular class situation. The activities we describe below help trainees to explore some of these variables by putting themselves into other people's shoes. Each of the two activities takes about an hour and is intended for up to thirty participants. An OHP is an advantage as well as tasksheets.

Ice-breaker

The trainer asks the participants to stand up and reads out a list of adjectives describing states, e.g. attentive, interested, enthusiastic, relaxed, happy, bored, uneasy, tired, sleepy, etc. The participants sit down when they find the adjective that suits them best at that moment. If there are participants still standing after the trainer has finished reading out the list, they can be asked to provide an adjective (or several, if that is the case) which describes their state or feelings at the beginning of the session. The trainer may perhaps ask some of the participants to explain their choice.

Variant

The participants are divided into two teams – "teachers" and "pupils". The "teachers' have to think of the possible states they would like their pupils to be in, during their class. The "pupils" have to think of the states they experience during different classes, or even at the beginning of the training session. Both teams provide several adjectives and justify their choice. If the lists differ, the participants have to think what the teachers need to do to get their pupils into the desired states.

continued →

Procedure 1: Simulated case study

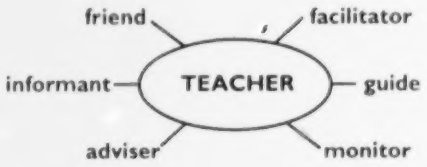
Participants are given the following case.

> Imagine you have to teach a large class. You have prepared your lesson very carefully; you have also taught it already to a small group, and it worked very well. But now, because the class is a big one, you are not sure you can control all of them. Since you do not know the pupils' names, you think of giving them name-cards with English names, to make it easier for you to call on them. Soon after the start of the lesson, you ask them to get into pairs and then into groups, to make up a dialogue or to imagine the conversation between two people in a picture, who seem very surprised at seeing something. From the beginning of the class there has been constant whispering, but now suddenly some boys become very noisy. When you speak to one of them, he starts laughing. You get angry and scold him, but it does no good. Finally you tell him to leave the room. After he has gone you think you can resume the activity. You have calmed the class down and the pupils, especially the girls, seem to respond well. But then the Head Teacher comes in and tells you that the rule is to keep all the pupils in the classroom and so you must take the boy back. He returns to his desk, but he keeps talking and giggling with his neighbour. You try to keep calm, but you don't know what to do. By this time the incident has ruined your lesson, because a lot of the pupils are seriously distracted.

Tell the trainees that they are going to simulate a discussion in the head teacher's office between the teacher, the disruptive student, another student in the class, an observer of the lesson and the head teacher. The trainees are divided into five groups, and each group is given one of the five role-cards (Appendix One) and has to prepare the point of view which that person can present in the discussion.

When the five groups have prepared their roles, the discussion can take place. This can be either in plenary, with one person for each role and the rest as spectators, or once again in groups, with each group comprising representatives of all five roles. The latter is more interesting, since it allows for different outcomes, which can then be compared in a round-up; but this of course takes longer.

In conclusion there can be a discussion of the different possible types of student in a class and the teacher's management role in relation to each. For example, the trainer can present different student types on the OHP and trainees brainstorm ways of coping with them. Another transparency can be used to show the teacher's different roles, perhaps in the form of a mind-map.



Procedure 2: Peer-teaching with role-play

To practise the actual skills that teachers can use in class management, we have used peer-teaching with role-cards to guide the peer-pupils in the behaviour they should adopt in the lesson. We shall take as an example the skill of ensuring maximum participation. This activity may follow the simulation described above; if not, it should begin with a discussion of the different possible types of pupil behaviour as regards participation in different settings, and the ways in which the teacher can react to each type.

Two or three trainees have been asked in advance to prepare different ten-minute lessons (or even the same one) consisting of teacher-to-student questions, for example on a picture. Up to ten of the others are asked to play the part of pupils and are given role-cards (see Appendix Two), but must not show these to each other or to the "teachers". There is thus an element of problem-solving, since neither the "teachers" nor the observers (the remainder of the trainee group) know what role each "pupil" is playing. It may even be useful to send out the teacher and observers while the pupils' roles are distributed and explained. The observers' tasks may be further defined by means of observation sheets, of which possible examples are given in Appendix Three.

It is important that each problem-pupil's role-card should embody "cut-off conditions" stating in what circumstances s/he should drop the problem behaviour. This means that if the teacher reacts to a certain type of problem behaviour in the recommended way, the problem will be solved. This is of course a simplification of what happens in real classrooms; but when we recommend certain behaviours for class management purposes, it is because we consider that they will have a positive effect, and we want the role-play to show this.

Feedback on the micro-lesson

After each ten-minute lesson, the teacher first gives his/her impressions of the level of participation. S/he says what problem types s/he identified among the pupils and what s/he tried to do about them. Next, the observers present their results and comment on the lesson. They too must try and identify the different learner types in the class and assess the teacher's response to them. Finally it is the learners' turn to report: they now disclose their role-identities and say how effectively they think the teacher dealt with the problems they posed. The trainer can then sum up, giving his/her opinion on what teaching behaviours were successfully demonstrated and which ones need further attention.

Trainees should discuss their states at the end of the session: say how they felt during the activities, and give the reasons for which their state has changed or remained the same. They should also discuss any factors influencing their states or feelings.

Then, if time permits, another "teacher" can be asked to teach a micro-lesson. New "pupils" are selected and the role-cards distributed to them. If the same lesson is re-taught by another trainee, they will see how differently the same lesson plan can be realised with different personalities, different reactions and different teacher-learner interactions. (Maybe it is this permanent challenge of class management that constitutes the charm of our profession as teachers.)

Conclusions

The roles of the teacher depend on the aims and nature of a particular classroom activity. The way the participants in the classroom interaction feel about each other and about the situation they are in also has an important influence on what goes on in the classroom. Feelings and attitudes can either make for smooth interaction and successful learning or can lead to conflict and the breakdown of communication. The nature of the role relationship between teacher and learner is not static. It changes with different learning activities, different teaching strategies, different circumstances. While there may be some magic involved in successful teaching, there are also certain practical principles behind it. In order to create our own personal magic, we must have a good command of the many roles the job of a teacher involves.

Appendix One

The meeting in the head teacher's office

You are the teacher. You want to have a talk with the problem student in the head teacher's office. Prepare for the discussion by writing down at least three things you've done to get the student involved in the lesson and at least three things you think you could have done.

You are the student who disturbed the class. The teacher has invited you for a talk in the head teacher's office. Prepare for the discussion by writing down at least three reasons for your behaviour and at least three things the teacher could do to get you involved in the class.

You are another student in the class. What's your opinion of the atmosphere in the class? Was it enjoyable, distracting or what? (Supply any other suitable adjectives.) Prepare for the discussion by writing down at least three things that could have been done by the teacher, by the student in question or by the other students in order to improve things.

You are an observer. You've just observed this class and you are supposed to give feedback to the teacher. Would you mention the problem in question? Prepare for the discussion by writing down at least three questions you could ask the teacher in relation to the problem and at least three suggestions you'd make in order to improve the situation in future.

You are the head teacher. The teacher has presented the case to you. Prepare for the discussion that is going to take place in your office by writing down at least three questions for the teacher and three for the student, in order to get an overview of the situation, and three possible suggestions for measures to overcome or avoid such problems.

Appendix Two

Pupil role-cards to practise maximising participation

You are a good student. You answer when the teacher calls on you and you don't call out. You are attentive. Your answers are correct. But you get less attentive if the teacher doesn't pay you much attention.

You are quite a good student. You answer when the teacher calls on you and you don't call out. You are attentive. Your answers are sometimes correct, sometimes not. You get less attentive if the teacher never notices you.

You feel bored. You don't feel like answering questions or participating in the lesson. You are neither interested in the topic nor in the type of activity. You scribble aimlessly in your notebook. But if the teacher speaks to you sharply twice and praises you when you answer, you will begin to participate properly.

You are a talkative student. You whisper to your neighbour and don't always pay attention. But you stop whispering after the teacher has told you three times to keep quiet and pay attention (e.g. Sh-noises, gestures, "Be quiet!").

You are an over-eager student. You call out the answers even if the teacher doesn't call on you. You snap your fingers or wave your hands. But you calm down and behave better after the teacher has told you not to call out, or has ignored your answers, three times.

You are a shy student. You never put your hand up and you avoid the teacher's eyes and never answer. But if the teacher uses your name twice and smiles at you, you begin to be less shy and will at least be able to repeat a sentence.

continued →

You are a shy student. You never put your hand up. The first two times the teacher calls on you, you are tongue-tied. But the third time, you give an answer, and after that you begin to be less shy.

Appendix Three: Observation sheets

Observation task 1

Aims: - to identify types of student in the class

- to observe the teacher's response to their behaviour

- to observe changes in the pupils' behaviour.

Make a plan of the class and number the students on it so as to identify them in the following chart.

Student	Students' behaviour	Teacher's response	Changes in student's behaviour
No 1			
No 2			

Observation task 2

Aims: - to code different types of class interaction

- to quantify each student's verbal participation

Make a plan of the class with a small circle to represent the teacher and each of the students.

On the plan, code each occurrence of each of the following types of verbal interaction by drawing arrows of the types shown between the teacher and the pupil concerned or between the two pupils concerned:

Tasks a question or provides a cue, S responds

T <----------> S

T asks a question or provides a cue, S doesn't respond

T----------> S

S calls out an answer uninvited

T <---------- S

Use the same types of arrow when students address questions or responses to each other.

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TRAINEE VOICES

Diary-Writing for Self-Reflection

Ng Jueh Hiang a teacher from Sarawak, Malaysia

Diary-writing is an increasingly popular tool to encourage self-reflection in both personal and professional development for teacher training. Self-reflection is seen as an effective tool to promote critical thinking and one that works towards at need to self-innovate at all times.

In this article, I wish to share my own experience of using diary-writing as a means of reflection, while taking part in a course which formed part of a B.A. TESOL at the University of Leeds.

Methods And Topics

As part of a course in In-service Teacher Education, we were given the opportunity of trying out one of the following methods of self-reflection.

Five methods were suggested:-

A Keeping a Learning Log (Tape recorded)

B Collaborative Journal Writing (Student – Tutor)

C Collaborative Journal Writing (Student – Student)

D Peer Discussion

E Observation and Interviewing of Tutors

It was suggested that some of the topics below could form the focus for the self-reflection which would be spread over a period of six weeks, at the end of which a report would be written on the advantages and disadvantages of the method chosed. The topics suggested were:

1. What we feel we have learned from each session on the B.A. TESOL Course.
2. Making comparisons and links with how have we learned on previous courses.
3. Effectiveness of particular methods used by the tutors and the reasons for them.
4. Ineffectiveness of methods used by the tutors and the reasons for them.
5. Problems encountered in learning and understanding the course content.
6. Ideas which could be adapted or used for our own teaching situations.
7. Identifying the purpose of each session.
8. Our experiences in working and collaborating with other students in the class.

Collaborative Journal Writing (Student-Tutor)

Of the five methods suggested, I chose Collaborative Journal Writing (Student-Tutor), because I was greatly attracted by the opportunity to "talk to", discuss with and share my learning experiences with my tutor. I wanted to find out how the dialogue with her would help to bring out a new awareness of learning in me.

My main focus on the weekly B.A. TESOL sessions centred on the objective and purpose of the workshops, the suggestions, ideas and methods which could be extracted for use and adaptation, and the way the workshop were run. As I sieved through each session mentally, I would identify the purpose of the workshop before giving an account of what had been taught and perceived as learnt. I would then reflect and make links with my own classroom teaching situations. There was a lot of soul-searching especially over new methods and ideas as I posed questions to myself and to my tutor. Through the six weeks of keeping the journal and sharing my thoughts, doubts, observation and queries with my tutor, the on-going reflection and introspection on the issues provided me with the following learning experience.

What I Learnt From Reflecting

1. Be more innovative, observant and resourceful
As I reflected and made links with my teaching in the classroom after each session, I found that I have very routinised ways of doing things. I tended to do the same thing year in, year out. Here is my diary entry after a session in which we brainstormed ideas for using the environment as a resource for teaching. The tutor's response follows.

"Right after the environmental walk, I was awakened by the realisation that the environment represents a treasure house of resources to be exploited for classroom teaching. Every visual object around us can be improvised to create simulating and interesting lessons."

"I think a lot of teaching is probably fairly routinised because teachers do not have the time and energy to keep trying new things. We therefore have to find new ways of trying to expose ourselves to new experiences while we are in the classroom." (Tutor's comment)

2. Be more receptive to new ideas and methods.
I realized that I had subscribed to what had been prescribed in the teacher's guide without giving much thought to new ideas or methods. Here is my entry after we had taken part in a session where the calculator was introduced during a session on cross-curricular approaches in ELT.

" the calculator opens up a whole new rich ground for discovery and investigation. My reflections on this activity show that we should move away from stereo-typed teaching, be more receptive towards new ideas and have an open mind in learning."

" I was very glad to be taken a step further into exploring and exploiting the teaching of other subjects to develop language in this way. The cross-curricular sessions have given me tips and ideas on how to exploit areas in other subjects to develop language in a meaningful and interesting manner ".

3. Move away from rigid, exam-oriented classrooms
Having usually taught examination classes at home, I had an in-built examination phobia which cause me to leave little room for interesting classroom learning. I geared my teaching towards achieving impressive results.

" I did a lot of soul searching over my teaching in the classroom. The nagging point was that I was always too cautious to deviate from the route specified and most of the time stifled by a rigid curriculum looming overhead."

" an overhead syllabus, stifled by time constraints and a very exam-oriented system do not leave much room for more interesting and creative writing."

4. The purpose and intention of a lesson is very important
This point has been highlighted many times during our methodology class. However, it was during the session on the applicability of the calculator to the teaching of English, that many of us literally sat though the workshop feeling very confused and lost. It highlighted the importance of this point in our own teaching!

" apparently the activity is very interesting. Perhaps the purpose and intention could have been better introduced and presented? This also leads me to reflect on my own teaching in the past. Have I left my students bewildered and lost as to what I have taught?"

" This is a very interesting reflection. It makes one realize the importance of making learners, at whatever level, clear about the purpose. If the learners are confused, they will be less receptive – even hostile." (Tutor's response)

5. Time is an important factor for learning to take place
As I observed and reflected on the workshops and my teaching experience, I realized time has a very importance role to play in the learning process. This need cuts across all age groups. Giving enough time defuses the pressure in carrying out a task. This observation surfaced during our session on the use of calculators in language teaching.

" It involves calculation and not everyone is good with figures. To be hurried through a seemingly difficult task builds up the pressure and thus the number of complaints. If more time were given for the teachers to work through the problems, a lot more pressure and interest could be aroused and that could contribute greatly towards acceptance of the ideas."

6. Be more tolerant and receptive to other's opinions and ideas
An observation made during the workshop session when different groups were presenting their activities after the environmental walk, suggested to me that even teachers had difficulties in working towards a consensus. It left me pondering over the essence of human working relationships. Do we preach one thing and do other another? Here are my diary entries after the session and my tutor's responses.

continued

" the group work and discussion also opened up 'a can of worms' about human behaviour; teachers' refusal to give recognition to other's work and failure to follow instructions, to name just two!"

" Interesting point. Why do you think teachers have problems in these areas even though they daily advise pupils how to work together ?" (Tutor's response)

" I believe the reason is that teachers have this overwhelming need to project themselves as knowledgeable and better than others and this inevitably brings about a lack of respect for instructions and others' opinion." (Response to Tutor's query)

" Yes, you're probably right. Tutors and teachers do not see the connection, of course when they are put in the role of the learner." (Tutor's response)

The Value of Collaborative Journal Writing

Collaborating with my tutor for six weeks left me convinced of the benefits of Collaborative Journal Writing in generating valuable self-reflection. Her comments, queries and suggestions were always 'food for thought.' They probed and encouraged me to give more depth to my reflections. They helped me to be more analytical and insightful, learning to perceive things on a boarder perspective. There was also this psychologically good feeling that I could confer with someone who knows, who could reassure and give pointers. This gave the method a special importance. Here are two of my tutor's queries and my responses after the session on the applicability of calculators in language teaching.

" Do you think it would also be useful to occasionally provide a less graded and freer activity to see what learners would do, it is like the idea of throwing the learners in the deep end of the swimming pool?" (tutor's Query)

" Yes,... I must admit that I tend to spoon-feed most of the time (Response to Tutor's query)."

" Maybe some sessions are not directly applicable to ELT but they provide ideas or strategies or skills which can be extracted and adapted for use in your own subject area. Maybe some sessions are concerned with more general educational principles which cut across subject boundaries." (Tutor's Comments)

" I'm glad that my attention is redirected to the real objective of the session." (Response to Tutor's comments)

The opportunity to share my learning experiences with a tutor has taken my learning towards new heights. The dialogue opened a dimension much broader in scope and perception, enabling me to take a "second look" at my professional life. In spite of the short period involved, I am convinced that I have emerged from the self-reflection with clearer directions and goals to achieve. Besides, I have enjoyed collaborating with my tutor via the diary.

To conclude, diary-writing is a powerful way of effecting self-reflection and in the process, changing attitudes.

Conference Report

שלום Shalom from Israel!

Shalom from Israel

"Teachers Develop, Teachers Research", TDTR3 Oranim, 8-10 September 1997

by Brînduşa Brînzei, University of Timişoara

Held under the auspices of IATEFL, the conference was hosted by the English Department of Oranim School of Education of the Kibbutz Movement, Haifa University, Israel. As the Second Call for Papers mentioned, Oranim School of Education 'is one of the leading teacher training institutions in Israel, and is especially well known for the professional level of its work with pre and inservice training of English teachers'. Chair of the organising committee was Kari Smith, a teacher at Oranim School of Education for 12 years.

Four or five concurrent sessions took place on each of the three days of the conference, in addition to a plenary. Well known professionals were invited as guest speakers: Dr Fred Korthagen and Dr Shosh Keiny (both prominent in the areas of Action Research and Teacher Development), and, last but not least, Penny Ur, member of the staff at Oranim. Presenters from all over the world brought their contribution to the success of the conference. Besides the famous above-mentioned participants, there were four not so famous (yet!) young Romanian graduates from the University of Timişoara: Mihaela Andrei, Brînduşa Brînzei, Dana Cismaş and Daniela Păunescu.

After having conducted qualitative research studies on our own, we adopted a collaborative model of presentation. Thus, we participated in the conference with two 60-minute presentations resulting from an inquiry-oriented approach to pre-service teacher education, namely ***The Learner – Measure of All Good Teaching; Researching Learner-Centredness*** (Brînduşa Brînzei and Dana Cismaş) and ***Mask or Realness in the relationship Teacher-Students: Trainees' Perspectives*** (Mihaela Andrei and Daniela Păunescu). They were both well received.

The social programme, remarkably organised, included a tour to the North of Israel. A three-day guided tour to Jerusalem and its surroundings followed the conference and was a unique occasion to visit the land of the Bible.

All in all, the conference was a great success, offering wonderful opportunities for socialising, learning new things and improving professionally. So, until TDTR4 to be held in Leuven, Belgium on 2, 3, 4 September 1999, let's develop and research some more.

What is a Teacher? Changing Perceptions ...

The Trinity College London teacher training programmes

Jenny Pugsley, Senior Moderator Language, Trinity College London.

Trinity runs a variety of teacher training programmes from initial Certificate to the advanced Diploma level with an additional range of specialist certificates, for the teaching of English for business purposes, teaching on a one-to-one basis, for teaching English to young learners, and the teaching of European languages. My own role is to ensure that the professional guidance to course providers and Trinity appointed moderators for our various Certificate courses is up-to-date and brings together the best but also most appropriate of current practice. There are almost 3,000 trainees taking our Certificate courses annually, mostly British, in around one hundred private and state sector schools in Britain and overseas : this year we have certificated trainees in Spain, Portugal, Ukraine, Hungary, Czech Republic, Turkey, New Zealand, Mexico, and Argentina, for example.

The initial Certificate in TESOL teacher training

The Cert TESOL is a pre-service course of training in language awareness and methodology leading to an internationally recognized qualification and one which is accepted under the British Council's Accreditation Schemes as a standard initial TESOL qualification. In Britain our Certificate TESOL is aimed mostly at would-be teachers with little or no EFL experience, and no training in TESOL methodology, although some may have a BEd or PGCE. Overseas we frequently train teachers experienced in formal approaches, whose English is good but susceptible to some improvement for everyday practical and contemporary usage, and who wish to combine the best of traditional methodology with modern approaches to methods, materials and evaluation.

How does a teacher train?

The Cert TESOL programme takes a minimum of 130 hours to cover theory but more significantly practice as appropriate at this level, introducing the trainee to the description and teaching of grammar and phonology and the theory behind various approaches to methodology, and providing trainees with the opportunity to put their new ideas into practice, to be observed, and be given the chance to evaluate their own lessons in terms of effectiveness and motivation. Trainees work with authentic classes over a minimum of six hours and are given immediate and constructive feedback by trained tutors. Trainees also work with an individual student of English in order to analyse her or his particular language learning problems and prepare a short programme for that student. Trainees observe experienced teachers of English putting theory into practice. Trainees spend a few hours learning a language not previously known to them and put themselves in the position of complete beginners, with the practical and emotional strain that that involves. They write up personal journals relating to their individual experience of the different course components, their perceptions and sense of their own rate of progress, their view (and their tutors' view) of where they are strong, and where they need to develop further.

Emotional stamina a must

Clearly, this period of training makes extensive demands on the individual trainee : on physical and mental stamina, on their ability to absorb theory and itsapplication, their ability to "manage" a class not only in the traditional sense of maintaining discipline but in the wider sense of encouraging students to talk to and listen to each other as well as the teacher; of encouraging students to have and express their own ideas. It is a process that makes constant demands on trainees' ability to evaluate, to be self-critical but not to the point of despair, to retain a view or vision of where they're at and where they're wanting to be in professional terms : to see their progress from a holistic viewpoint as well as in terms of specific skills for development.

Shared and unshared experiences

These are, I would suggest, sophisticated skills even at initial Certificate level and our 3,000 trainees will bring a considerable variety of experience and assumptions to the process. **Trainers** have to remember that what is for them a basic assumption may be a new, even strange, concept for the trainee. For example, it is well known that most British people of a certain age were obliged at school to study, in the formal sense, English grammar. Not everyone emerged equally competent in the fine art of parsing, but it was regarded (rightly or otherwise) as one of the indicators of a reasonable education that you were familiar with the basic concepts and terminology of the grammar of your own language. It has not been the case for younger people in Britain, many of whom have had neither the opportunity nor encouragement to study the structure of language. What was previously assumed to be a shared area of knowledge between trainee and trainer is no longer. (This is not the case, of course, for many of our overseas teachers and trainers.)

Teachers and authority

For a second example of this difference of perception between trainers and trainees, let us look at the question of authority. Most experienced teachers of EFL in Britain

continued

and overseas are now well aware of the view of the teacher as not simply a figure of authority but also a facilitator, an encourager, a resource person, a guide ... these views are not accepted by everyone but are fairly widely disseminated as being worth consideration. However, one of the things most interesting about new EFL teachers in training in Britain is that many are very quick to regard themselves as the "centre of attention", the focal point in a class. Some relish the feeling of being "in charge", of having or being seen to have authority, others are daunted by the prospect. Trainees undergo a subtle process in slowly realising that while they do have a very special role in class (and they should never forget this), they should not see themselves as the only source of wisdom and opinion. One of the aims of the communicative approach is, properly, to fit students for independent learning, giving them the academic and interpersonal tools to learn real, functional English by practising real, functional English. Both teacher and learner must be able to differentiate between diverse learning styles and approaches, so that fluency and confidence are encouraged, albeit at the cost of 100% accuracy and appropriateness, and without any sense of guilt! Many new teachers have to learn the skills of management and control and then unlearn them, so to speak, to give a little more room to their students.

Teaching : vocation or vacation?

My third example of this difference of perception between trainers and trainees is the question of who wants to be a teacher and for how long. The traditional perception of the teacher in Britain and elsewhere was, I think, that teaching was what we called a vocation, or "calling", and that if you had the "proper" level of commitment, you would want to do it for all or most of your life. It was not simply a job. Now, increasingly in Britain and elsewhere many teachers have a number of jobs, for economic and other reasons, and that is seen as a quite respectable approach to your working life. What is a different development is the business of people who "come into" teaching for a period from having done something completely different and then go on to do something quite different. It is difficult to regard teaching at that point as a vocation. It is a job, possibly a profession, not really a career. It raises the whole question of what it means "to be a teacher" rather than simply "doing teaching" for a time. There are excellent teachers who have taught only briefly and there are teachers who have twenty years' experience (twenty years of doing the same thing ...) There is also the question of whether teachers are expected to adopt certain ethical - environmental - religious attitudes, or whether this is unrealistic, and undesirable. This is something that trainers and examination boards such as our own have to consider very carefully when we set the parameters or boundaries of teacher training programmes. It is particularly important in the case of training teachers to teach children, for example, where we have to consider the particular responsibilities held by any teacher : how far do we introduce into our entry requirements some form of vetting of a trainee's character, criminal record and so on? Is this our responsibility or is it going beyond our proper remit? Is it possible to police? However difficult this may be, should we not try?

The global training room : room for difference

To return to the question of shared and unshared experiences, what I want to say is that trainees of different ages, educational and cultural backgrounds bring many different assumptions to the training process. As a trainer you must identify these and deal with them sensitively but imaginatively. At Trinity we expect course providers to agree with us clear details of course content and forms of assessment but then we allow individual schools, colleges, universities to adapt our guidelines within agreed parameters to their own local market and to individual trainees. We ensure common standards of quality across all our centres by inspecting organizations wishing to run the courses before they may describe themselves as validated by Trinity.

Consult, listen, learn

At the end of every course validated by Trinity, a moderator visits the school or college and talks to all trainees and course staff in order to check that the course as described in the literature is what is being offered, that it meets its own internal and our external criteria, and that trainees have every opportunity to give us feedback on that course. We regard the training process as a collaborative event between the three corners of the triangle : the course providing institutions, the trainees, and the examining board, ourselves. When we revise our procedures or our syllabus, we consult widely among our course providers and our moderators so that in setting down the regulations, we draw on the experience of a wide but relevant range of individuals - the professional English language teaching community. We would welcome your comments, criticisms and inquiries.

WHO READS THE TEACHER TRAINER?

Here is a sample list of subscribers:

Asoc. Bahieuse de Cultura Inglesa, Argentina

British Council Dhaka, Zagreb, Nicosia, Kyoto

British Consulate, Istanbul

Colegio Bolivar, Cali, Colombia

Danish National Library of Education, Copenhagen

Universities in Erlangen, Munich, Eichstatt, Munster, Germany

Language Schools in Wimbledon, Totnes, Cambridge, Oxford

Preservice Students, Hong Kong Institute of Education

Resource centres, University departments and individual trainers in Bucharest, Timisoara, Brad, Oradea, Resita, Craiova, and Arad, Romania

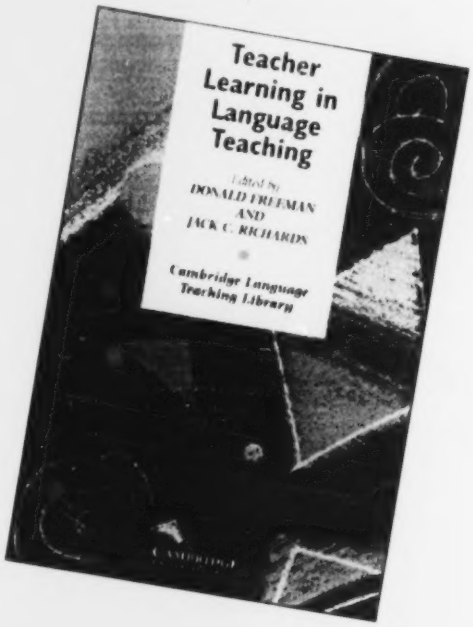
Teacher trainers in Mexico, New Zealand, Spain and Switzerland

BOOK REVIEW

Teacher Learning in Language Teaching

Edited by Donald Freeman and Jack C. Richards
Cambridge Language Teaching Library, CUP, 1996; ISBN 0-521-55907-3
Reviewed by Gabriela S. Matei, Romania

Teacher Learning in Language Teaching, edited by Donald Freeman and Jack C. Richards is a collection of reports on research projects drawing on teacher learning in language teaching, presented as descriptive accounts of the experiences of teachers.



Purposes

The editors' expressed intent was to edit the first formal collection of research on teacher learning in the field of language teaching. A previous collection, edited in 1988 by James Calderhead (*Teachers' Professional Learning*), was not restricted to this field.

The volume is also meant to start a conversation (p. ix). Perhaps it is too soon to tell if it has succeeded, but I think it has all the chances, as the times and conditions seem very auspicious. With a bit of imagination, one can see Freeman and Richards' collection "conversing", rather congenially, with at least two other teacher education volumes printed in the same year: Calderhead (1996) and Claxton et al. (1996).

Freeman and Richards introduce the research reported on in their collection as an "important and worthwhile step towards enriching the field of language teaching by deeper and closer examinations of how language teachers come to know what they know and do what they do in their work" (p. ix).

Readership

It is a little difficult to identify the audience the editors had in mind when putting together the volume. They do refer to the growing number of teachers engaging in research on teaching. However, the issue of readership is moot: is the book for teacher educators, researchers, teachers, or all of them? I would say that the book is first of all aimed at teacher educators doing research on learning to teach (most likely, at doctoral or master's level). I frankly believe, however, that the collection can be very useful for all teacher trainers — and for teachers interested in professional learning, although a few of the more rigorously drawn research reports in the book may seem somewhat long-winded for people not familiar with research metalanguage and paraphernalia.

Research paradigm

Talking about research, the authors of the studies in the collection have used interpretive approaches, consistent with qualitative and hermeneutic research: they have mainly tried to **understand, interpret** and **explain the data collected from the participants.** It is undoubtedly the editors' merit to have been able to put together a long-awaited collection that is so specific: qualitative research on learning to teach languages. It's pure manna for people who are doing research in exactly the same field, and using the same research paradigm.

Theme

The central theme of the book is clearly stated more than once, and we can find the thesis of the volume reiterated in the last paragraph of Freeman's epilogue:

> "The research in this book is intended to further our understanding of what language teachers know and how they learn to teach. It should also help to establish these topics as an important field of inquiry and study. Language teaching and language teacher education have long been an "unstudied problem" in which traditional practices, conventional wisdom, and disciplinary knowledge have dominated. These practices and assumptions have been subject to little critical scrutiny and less organised study. The research reported in this volume is an important step in addressing this situation." (p. 374)

I think it would be fair, however, to mention a valuable predecessor to this book, namely Richards and Nunan's Second Language Teacher Education (1990), and especially its last part, the "Case Studies".

continued

Editors and authors

The editors of *Teacher Learning in Language Teaching*, Donald Freeman and Jack C. Richards, need no introduction, as they are two of the most often quoted names in the field of second language teaching and teacher education. This is not their first joint venture: they were co-authors before (Freeman and Richards, 1993). They have also edited (separately) other valuable collections in the field of language teaching (for instance, Freeman and Cornwell, 1993, and Richards and Lockhart, 1994, to mention only two titles). Several of the authors in the collection are quite resonant names from the field of language teacher education, while many of the others are names that you come across more and more frequently when looking into research on teacher learning or teacher education.

The authors of the studies are mainly teacher educators researching their own practice, so we could safely consider their reports as instances of action research or reflective practice; in five of the fifteen cases, the investigations are collaborative, successfully illustrating another concept that is very much "in" at the moment in teacher education and development.

The editors concede that the putting together of this collection was brought about by their realising (at a TESOL conference in Brazil) that the field of language teacher education had begun to change in "important and dramatic ways" (p. ix). They identified a small and emerging community of researchers and practitioners working to understand teacher learning in language teaching as a phenomenon in its own right. Twenty-five of those researchers and practitioners have eventually become the contributors of Teacher Learning in Language Teaching.

Book organization

The book contains fifteen studies, preceded by a Preface and a Prologue. The chapters are divided in three sections, each prefaced briefly and efficiently by the editors. The book ends with an Epilogue written by Donald Freeman, and which constitutes Section IV by itself (the reason for this chapter being both an epilogue and a section by itself eludes me at the moment). Each chapter is followed by references which will be invaluable for those wishing to pursue the aspects presented. Moreover, each preface to the sections ends with a list of further readings. The book itself ends with no less than three indexes: author, subject and research. I find this decision of the editors quite useful, although it might get on the nerves of less patient readers. If the editors had in mind a wider readership, i.e., teachers included (and I like to think they did) then a glossary of research terms would have been welcome.

The vast majority of the chapters are actually research reports, respecting, with small variations, the classical structure of such a piece of writing: rationale, theoretical framework, research design, data collection procedures, findings and their interpretation, implications (mainly for teacher education) and conclusions. An insightful set of conclusions pertaining to the whole collection can be found at the end of the Prologue.

The sections are organised chronologically, trying to follow - not strictly - the stages of a teacher's career cycle. I have appreciated this structure as particularly coherent.

Book contents

Section I, "Beginnings: Starting out in language teaching", contains five chapters which examine the first stages of teacher learning (experiences in pre-service as well as those of experienced teachers starting out in new ways of teaching):

Katherine M. Bailey et al., 'The language learner's autobiography: Examining the "apprenticeship of observation"'

Karen E. Johnson, 'The vision versus the reality: The tensions of the TESOL practicum'

Gloria Gutiérrez Almarza, 'Student foreign language teacher's knowledge growth' (and if you're not wowed by the sheer number of noun premodifiers in this report's title, you will surely be by its thoroughness and insight)

Anné Knezevic and Mary Scholl, 'Learning to teach together: Teaching to learn together'

Amy B. M. Tsui, 'Learning how to teach ESL writing'

Section II, entitled 'Transitions: Learning in the practice of teaching', contains four chapters which focus on the practice of teaching, and which also show concern with transitions in classroom practice:

Patrick R. Moran, '"I'm not typical": Stories of becoming a Spanish teacher'

Anne Burns, 'Starting all over again: From teaching adults to teaching beginners'

Polly Ulichny, 'What's in a methodology?'

Deborah Binnie Smith, 'Teacher decision making in the adult ESL classroom'

Section III, entitled 'Learning to teach: The role of language teacher education' is the longest (and, I think, the most valuable for teacher trainers), containing six chapters which examine the impact of formal teacher education on what teachers know and do in their classrooms:

Donald Freeman, 'Renaming experience/reconstructing practice: Developing new understandings of teaching'

Jack C. Richards, Belinda Ho and Karen Giblin, 'Learning how to teach in the RSA Cert'

Francis Bailey, 'The role of collaborative dialogue in teacher education'

Michael Wallace, 'Structured reflection: The role of the professional project in training ESL teachers'

Ora Kwo, 'Learning how to teach English in Hong Kong classrooms: Patterns of reflections'

Martha C. Pennington, 'When input becomes intake: Tracing the sources of teachers' attitude change'

As I have mentioned before, Section IV, with no preface and entitled "Epilogue", consists of only one chapter, Donald Freeman's 'The "unstudied problem": Research on teacher learning in language teaching'. It clearly and effectively brings together the strings of the other chapters, and places all of them — as well as the field — firmly against a theoretical background of educational research.

I have decided to mention all the titles of the chapters, not only to whet the appetite of potential readers, but also to demonstrate the wide range of topics addressed — all resting, however, within the limits imposed by the editors in the title: teacher learning in language teaching.

The prefaces of the sections have been remarkably useful (and they shouldn't be missing from such collections), not only for anticipating the chapters to follow, but also for establishing links across papers from all sections.

Contextual issues

A book reviewer always tries to see if there is anything left out from a book. I asked myself the same question, and the most ostentatious absentees in my opinion, are certain geographical contexts: of the fifteen chapters, seven have as their setting the USA, four are studies conducted in Hong Kong, one in Canada, one in Australia, one in the UK and one in Malaysia and the UK. No reference is made to the rest of Europe, nor to continents such as South America, Africa, and the rest of Asia. This may come as surprising, if we think of all the developments that have been happening in various countries from these vast regions. My guess, however, is that this was not an oversight, but had objective reasons, such as availability of contributors for the editors. On the other hand, some of these contexts have become increasingly present in other promising or already well-established series.

Research issues

Some hard facts about the chapters of the collection: although all studies are considered by the editors to draw on a wide and conventional variety of qualitative data, and most of the authors go to a lot of pains to explain the research paradigm they are functioning in, there are, however, a few studies that do not seem to bother about discussing or, for that matter, justifying, from a research point of view, their statements (e.g., Tsui, and Wallace). For this reason, and for this reason only, one may say that they rest a bit uneasily in this collection. However, I have found the discussion, interpretation of the data and especially the implications considered in the above-mentioned chapters of high value. Again, a personal guess would be that the respective authors were not 100% certain about the readership of the volume, so they decided to write their "story" differently, with less emphasis on the research aspects.

Five of the studies are instances of collaborative research, either involving two teachers or teacher educator(s) and trainee(s). As data collection procedures, seven of the studies have used interviewing, four stimulated recall, four observation of classroom activity, three narratives, three "stories", three case studies, three journals, one questionnaires and one autobiography. I took the pains of even counting the research subjects that the authors have collected data from: the fifteen studies have fifty-nine subjects in all, which, if we were in a quantitative mood, would give us a mean of four subjects per study. If we look closely, however, this is not a true picture, as there are only three studies that have four subjects, whereas the rest of 12 studies (viz. 80% of them) have between nine and one subjects. (As an aside, this may show that not only the authors in the volume, but also the reviewer, have clearly divorced the quantitative research paradigm.)

The volume is heterogeneous in many respects: contexts, data collection procedures, ways of reporting, accessibility for a wider audience. This does not necessarily have to be a weakness, as "teacher learning is such a complex human phenomenon, it is critical to recognise that no single research formula will suit its study" (p.372).

Writing issues

The book is organised in a very reader-friendly way (who that reader may be, is another matter). All in all, I think it is clearly written and very interesting to read. Some chapters do make more enjoyable reading, however, whereas others may excel in rigorousness (in most cases, though, the two are not mutually exclusive). Personally, I particularly enjoyed reading the first chapter, which "spoke to me" very poignantly — as well as gave me a few teacher training ideas — which is no small deed, if we take into consideration that is has no less than eight authors (and here they are, the first one the trainer, and her trainees: K. M. Bailey, B., B. Braustein, N. Jagodzinsky Fleischman, M. P. Holbrook, J. Tuman, X. Waissbluth, and L. J. Zambo). Perhaps it rings so true because they are both the researchers and the researched in the study they are reporting on.

(Re)Commendations

To what extent would I recommend this book? Indeed, very warmly. I would even invite practitioners (teachers and especially trainers) with little interest in research to give it a try, perhaps even skipping some of the more heavy-going bits (usually on research design and procedures). The chapters provide a treasure of insight and thought-provoking implications for teacher education and development. It can really "enlighten our understanding of language teachers mental lives and how they conceive their classroom teaching" (p. 2).

What effect has the book had on me? It has made me feel less lonely in my quest for understanding how teachers learn how to teach languages — a topic that has been considered ineffable for so many years, that it's almost inconceivable that — after reading Freeman and Richards' collection — I can actually say, "Yeah, that's how some teachers learn how to teach foreign languages!"

I also see the book as a felicitous attempt at pulling us away from dilettantism in teacher education, away from saying things like, "One can only learn how to teach after

continued

one has taught for an x number of years; it only comes with experience: how it happens is a mystery."

References

(including, for those interested, further reading on understanding teacher learning and teacher education)

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Biodata

Gabriela S. Matei is a senior lecturer in the English Department at the University of Timisoara, Romania, where she is concerned, amongst other things, with the ELT methodology courses, and the teaching practice. She is working on her doctorate on an inquiry-oriented approach to initial teacher education.

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1 I am referring here especially to personal favourites like the Heinemann *Teacher Development Series* and *The European Language Classroom*, as well as the Cambridge Teacher Training and Development Series.

2 Actually heard on several occasions, uttered by pedagogy professors and foreign language methodologists.

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The Editor

PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED

Of special interest and relevance to teacher trainers are:

Chairing meetings by Peter Honey. An 80 page A4 size ring binder containing self and other assessment questionnaires on all the essentials for preparing and running a good meeting and notes on each of the 60 points covered in the questionnaire. Available for £60 from P. Honey, 10 Linden Ave, Maidenhead, Berks, SL6 6HB, England

The effective teacher by Cedric Cullingford. Cassell (1975) ISBN 0-304-33180-5. Taking the stance that although some teachers have natural in-born abilities, all teachers can learn to be more effective, this book discusses, mostly at the primary level, the characteristics of an effective teacher, what children should learn, organising the classroom, using books and technology and 12 other topics. If you teach children or are prepared to winnow this general education material for your purposes, you'll find many interesting sections full of good sense.

The first-time trainer by Tom Goad. Amacom ISBN 0-8144-7942-1. Directed at managers, supervisors, team leaders or others who are suddenly invited to train people, tomorrow, this quick practical guide focuses on an eight point programme (facilitate learning, focus on performance, focus on learning, be prepared, deliver effectively, get learners involved, get feedback, improve continuously). Each point is given a chapter full of workable, practical ideas without jargon and demystifying basic training skills.

Exam classes by Peter May. OUP (1996) ISBN 0-19-437208-1. Divided into six sections: exam strategies, reading, writing, grammar, listening and speaking, this book offers the teacher 87 different activities which are suitable for students taking English language examinations at all levels. The activities, all of which have a recommended student ability level, both help prepare the student for the actual exam, as well as provide interesting and relevant ideas and materials for classroom use. The book clearly shows the student, through various techniques, how exam questions should be answered. At the same time, language learning itself is not forgotten; there are activities which help develop the student's knowledge of structures and vocabulary. A useful book for anyone teaching an exam class.

The consultancy approach: toward more effective EFL In-Service Teacher Training by Lisa Harshbarger. TESOL publications, 1600 Cameron St, Suite 300, Alexandria, VA, 22314-2751, USA. In the 'Voices of experience' series, this package (manual and audio cassette tape) includes notes to the trainer, background reading, role play cards, handout, tape transcript and reading references list. If you like learning by listening, like listening to American English or can't get to a conference but have from 90 minutes to half a day, preferably with friends or colleagues, to spend on professional development then you may find these packages stimulating. This particular package discusses designing training programmes for in-service teachers in Central Europe. Fast paced, dense and with a strong presenter angle, there is plenty to discuss.

New ways in teaching culture Alvino Fantini, ed. TESOL (1997) ISBN 0-939-791-70-6. A collection of over 60 short articles and teaching recipes giving a theoretical and conceptual framework for why and how to include cultural and intercultural dimensions when teaching ESOL. Sections on language and culture, sociolinguistics, cultural and intercultural explanation and a very useful, annotated bibliography.

New ways in content based instruction Brinton, D and P Masters, eds. TESOL (1997) ISBN 0-939791-67-6. The only collection of articles and teaching recipes I have come across to cover theme based L2 courses, sheltered content area courses and language and content tandem courses. Ideas have been chosen for their generalisability but are sketched out with a particular teaching purpose in mind so readers need to adapt mentally as they read for their own settings. Good activities index.

Face to face Michael Byram ed. CILT (1997) ISBN 1-874016-78-X. This collection of 7 articles is designed to help those involved in visits or exchanges in modern language education in the UK to think more systematically about their work. It establishes a pedagogical framework and then discusses both language student and student teacher visits and exchanges. Useful for anyone involved in student residence abroad. CILT Pubs at Grantham Book Services Ltd, Isaac Newton Way, Alma Park Industrial Estate, Grantham, Lincs NG31-9SD, England.

Crossing frontiers: The school study visit abroad by David Snow and Michael Byram. CILT (1997) ISBN 1-874016-84-4. A slim practical booklet for inexperienced teachers wanting to take groups of children abroad but feeling the task is too complex. Sections on defining aims, practical organisation, fieldwork, developing the programme, fostering group identity and, after return.

Teacher development resource book by Fiona Balloch. (1996) ISBN 1-898295-59-X. Available from English Experience, 25 Julian Rd, Folkestone, England CT19-5HW. A4 spiral bound, handy collection of 30 photocopiable activities for teacher training and development groups. Each activity is clearly explained.

continued

Topics include native versus non-native speaking teachers, teacher and student roles, making a teacher's life easier, doing your own classroom research and coping with being observed.

Readings in teacher development by Katie Head and Pauline Taylor. Heinemann (1997) ISBN 0-435-240552. A relaxed and interesting mixture of reading extracts, Commentary and activities on topics such as defining TD, ways of working with groups, supporting yourself, managing your own change. The overall effect is of being in a professional conversation in a friendly, well-informed staffroom. Recommended.

From a different point of view- the lives and experiences of visually impaired people by Sally French and John Swain. (1997) ISBN 1-85302-55-1-8. Jessica Kingsley Pubs with the Royal National Institute for the Blind. This workbook aims to help young people, 11-16 year olds, to explore the lives and experiences of visually impaired people and to gain an insight into the discrimination they face. It contains interviews and case studies and is based on a social and physical barriers disability model rather then an individual's impairment disability model. As an adult, I still learned a lot from this booklet.

Teaching pronunciation, a reference for teachers of ESOL by M. Celce-Murcia et al. CUP (1996) ISBN 0-521-40694-3 + cassette. A large book with small print which gives an overview of pronunciation instruction and of research on the acquisition of pronunciation, a description of the English sound system and how it intersects with other areas of language. If your eyes have already glazed over and if you hate using phonetic symbols, minimal pair drills and pictures of the inside of people's heads then look at Chapter 10 on new directions in the teaching of pronunciation and chapter 11 on curriculum issues. Thorough.

Teaching literature Judy Kravis ed. Cork University Press (1995) ISBN 1-85918-026-4. 23 interviews with teachers and writers from US, Ireland and England on how and what they teach and on the literature teaching they have received both good and bad. The book has a talking tone and is very readable, viewing teaching literature at its best as being a form of liberation and a two way event, at its worst as insidious imprisonment for student and teacher.

Doing supervision and being supervised by Robert Langs. Karnac Books (1994) ISBN 1-85575-060-0. This book is about supervision of psychoanalytic psychotherapy. As such, it would not immediately appear to be relevant to our field. However, we HAVE borrowed the terms supervision and supervisor and regularly use them in teacher education and so this book, a classic in its field, is a good place to go to check whether the borrowing is fruitful, dangerous or both. You need some knowledge of psychotherapy and analysis to enjoy the discussions of privacy and confidentiality, supervisory crises and responsibilities and entitlements.

Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences by Howard Gardner. (2nd edition 1993) Fontana Press ISBN 0 00-686290-X. There is a 17 pp 'Introduction to the Second Edition' designed to update the reader on the considerable amount of work that had been done in the area of multiple intelligence theory since 1983. Linked to this introduction is a page of references, many of which predate 1984. The three main divisions of the book are 'Background', 'The Theory', 'Implications and Applications'. So much of this book has entered recent ELT lore that new readers might find many of the basic points and arguments familiar. The book is still worth reading for the examples brought forward in support of the theory.

Vocabulary: Description, Acquisition and Pedagogy. N Schmitt and M McCarthy, eds. (1997) CUP ISBN 0-521-58551-1. A 15 article collection with the main divisions: 'Vocabulary and description', 'Vocabulary and acquisition', 'The pedagogical context'. Among the contributors are: Paul Nation, Michael McCarthy, Ronald Carter, Paul Meara, Batia Laufer, Michael Swan. A welcome up-date of the state of knowledge about vocabulary and the second language learner.

Measured Words: The development of objective language testing by Bernard Spolsky. (1995) OUP ISBN 0-19-437201-4. The book focuses mainly on the histories of the American TESOL exam and the University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate First Certificate and Proficiency exams. It investigates how and why at different times two different institutions decided either for exams which were rather reliable but not very valid (TESOL), or rather valid but not very reliable (Proficiency). Recent improvements in both camps are discussed. There are no detailed statistical arguments in the book. The article by John Read (in Schmitt and McCarthy, noted just above) is a useful supplement to the tale of the TOEFL.

Periodicals

Reading in a foreign language, the journal of the International Education Centre of the University College of St Mark & St John, Derriford Rd, Plymouth, Devon, England has new editors...Jane Spiro & Diane Lubelska. They are interested in receiving relevant contributions to the journal on topics such as reading and ESP, culture, TT and development, literature, materials writing, vocabulary, young learners and testing.

The ACELT journal Practical papers on teaching English language and literature in the Philippines from Ateneo Center for ELT, Ateneo de Manila University, Loyola Heights, Quezon City, Philippines.

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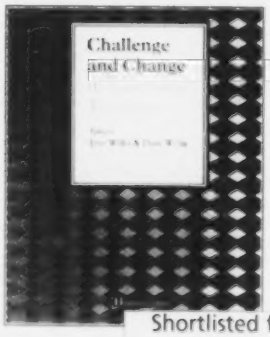

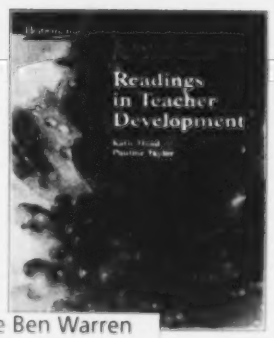

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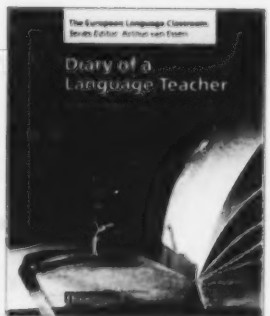

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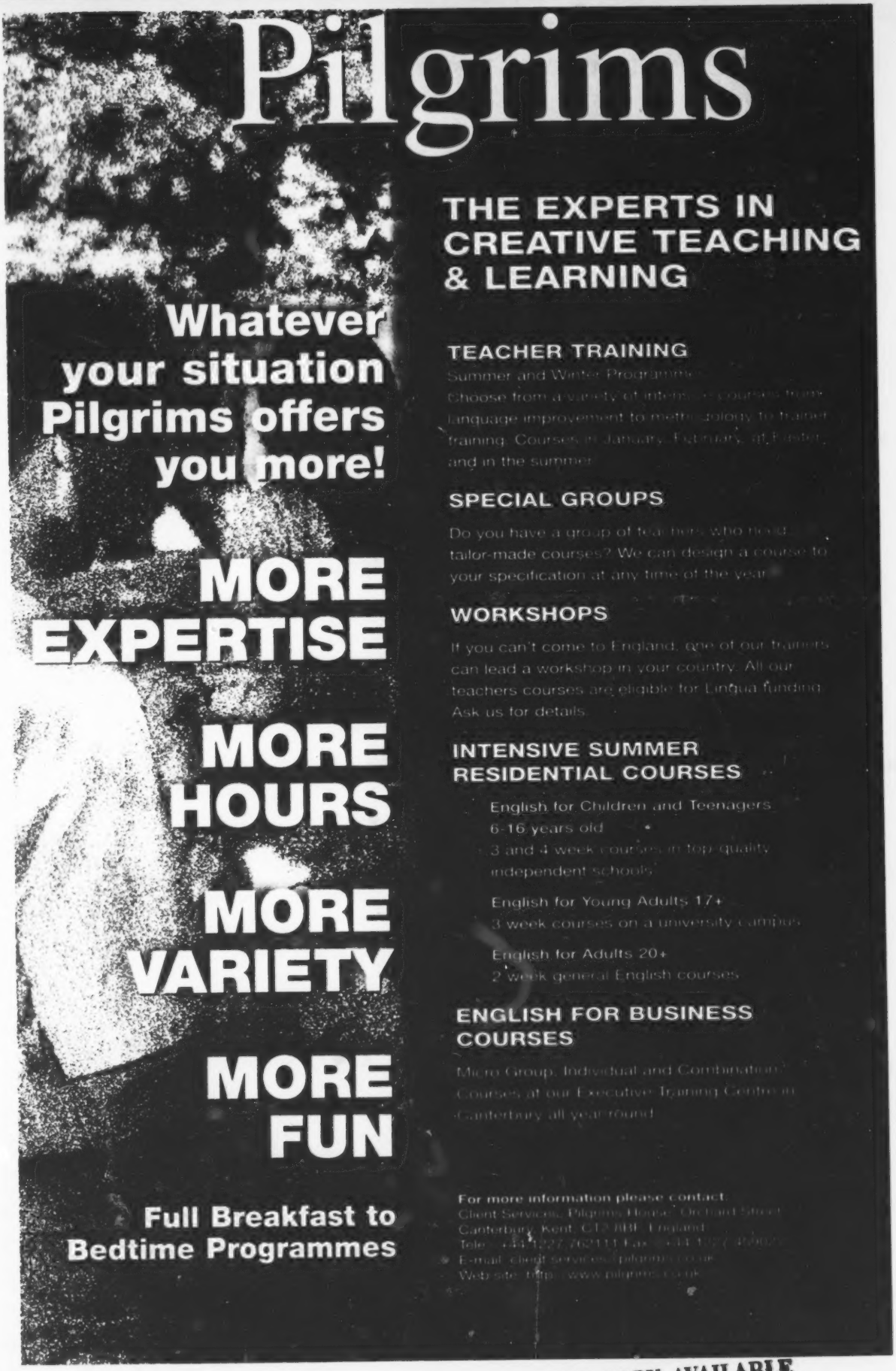

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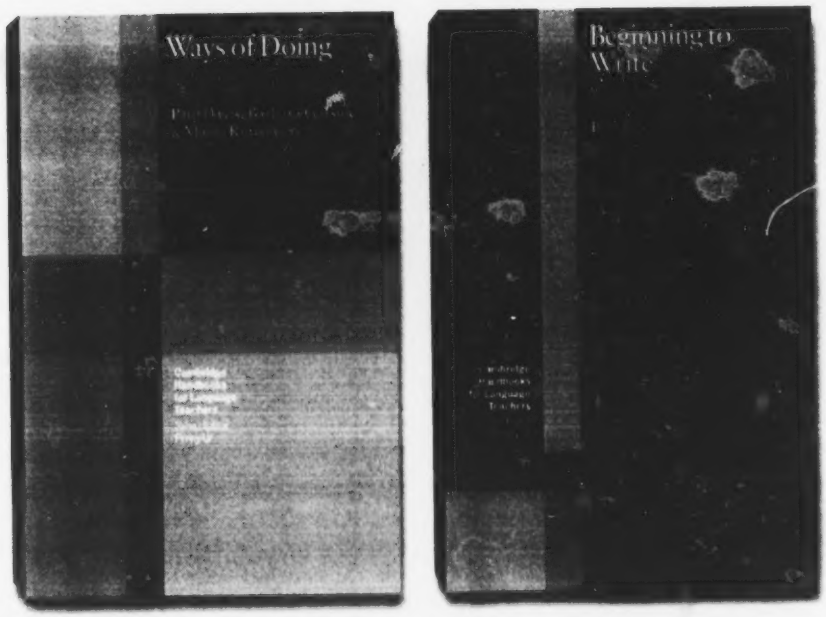

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ABOUT "THE TEACHER TRAINER"

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The journal comes out three times a year and makes use of a variety of formats e.g. article, letter, comment, quotation, cartoon, interview, spoof, haiku ideas. If the idea is good, we'll print it whatever voice you choose to express it in.

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Editorial

Welcome to the last issue of 1998, the year of the purple cover!

This issue contains a good mixture of practical ideas that you can use in your training room tomorrow, a thought piece to challenge your work philosophy, views from both sides of the training equation and background information on teacher training resources.

The practical

Katy Salisbury (P3) describes a sequence of activities she uses to introduce teachers to some of the issues involved in class observation. The texts for all the task cards and tables are provided for you.

Jeremy Parrott (P7) offers an origami class with a difference! His paper folding exercise provides a metaphor that stimulates discussion amongst trainees on learning processes and language classes.

Regina Lo (P18) tells us how to run seminars chaired by student teachers so that they and their peers can use their own practicum as a case study for peer discussion and supervisor input.

Monika Gedicke (P20) shares with us a procedure for use on the last day of a teacher training course. It involves participants thinking about the course, writing individual action plans and writing later, follow up letters.

Thought piece

Rachel Bodie (P9) talks about how teaching staff subjected to multiple observations and inspections can keep centred by working on their own definitions of good quality teaching.

Views from both sides

Barbara Bettinelli, Giovanni Monticolo and Rosario Tropea (P11) are Italian teachers of English. They describe their reactions to a Master's level course they attended in the UK. I'm very proud of the Trainee Voices column that this trio contribute to. It takes courage for people to be honest about their experiences while undergoing training or even afterwards. They often rightly fear jeopardising their grades, upsetting people or being taken for a grump! So, thanks to all brave contributors to this "Consumer feedback" column.

Andrew Foster and Paul Mercieca (P13), two trainers concerned to improve their pre-service course, share a re-vamped language awareness course component with us.

Background information

The interview with David Graddol (P16) the author of "The future of English", gives us a peek inside a book that draws on the latest facts, figures and sources to set our own brief time in EFL into a broader historical perspective.

Donard Britten is back (P22) with a review of Penny Ur's latest book, on teacher training, and there are thumbnail sketches of another twenty books of interest to teacher trainers in the Publications Received column (P25)

I hope you really enjoy the practical, thoughtful, informative mix of this issue. Do write in with the names and addresses of any friends or colleagues you think might like to know about us, with any comments on this issue and with any articles you think might interest other readers. I look forward to hearing from you!

Tessa Woodward

Editor

SESSION PLAN

Observation in the Round

by Katy Salisbury, International Education Centre, University College of St Mark and St John, Plymouth, UK.

Introduction

I developed this sequence of activities to introduce teachers to some of the issues involved in classroom observation. It was originally designed to last 80-120 minutes and to stand as a single workshop session for mixed nationality English teachers attending a conference. However, I have also used it to provide an initial shared experience for teachers with varying amounts of observation experience, on longer, more academically-oriented trainer preparation programmes.

The activity sequence is designed to prompt discussion of the following questions about observation .

- Who observes whom?
- Why do they observe?
- What is the relationship between the observers and observed?
- Do they observe in order to describe or interpret or evaluate?
- Does the observation focus on the teacher or learner(s) or interaction between them?
- What type of recording 'instrument' is used e.g. a detailed checklist, a blank sheet of paper or nothing at all?
- Using the metaphor of film making, do observers use a 'wide angle' or 'zoom' lens?
- How can reliability be ensured?
- Which observation approaches are suitable for which situation?

My main concern in developing the session was to offer participants a shared experience of observation within a relatively realistic setting, maximizing the number of alternative observation approaches within one event. Before this I had only based sessions on video recordings of lessons, giving practice in using different observation instruments. On longer courses I had also arranged for participants to observe 'live' lessons in local schools. Whilst both these resources offered valuable insights, neither could provide what I was looking for. On the one hand, video gave shared experience for large numbers of observers but it was hard to find unedited footage which suited all participants; and more importantly for my purposes, viewers were slaves to predetermined camera angles. On the other hand, the live lesson replicated conditions of real observation but it was impossible to offer exactly the same, shared experience for a large group of observers.

Procedures

In the end, I opted for a compromise arrangement of a live class but in an artificial setting, as I shall explain.

In brief, the activity sequence entails the trainer conducting an English language 'lesson' with a group of volunteer 'students' drawn from the participants. The remaining majority are assigned a variety of different observation tasks to undertake during the 15 minute 'lesson'. [NB In the following description of procedures, the figures given are for an example group of 20 but I have used this sequence with groups as large as 70].

Trainer's Notes

- Ask for four volunteers. Explain that they are going to take part in an observation activity but do not give any more details. Assure them that they will be treated well, give them Task card A (see below) and ask them to leave the room for five minutes.
- Clear a large space in the room and place four empty chairs at the centre of it.
- Explain to the remaining participants that you are going to simulate an English Language class with the four volunteers as 'learners', who will be seated on these chairs.
- Group the participants in fours as Groups B, C, D, and E and place them as shown in Fig 1. Distribute Task Cards. (See below).

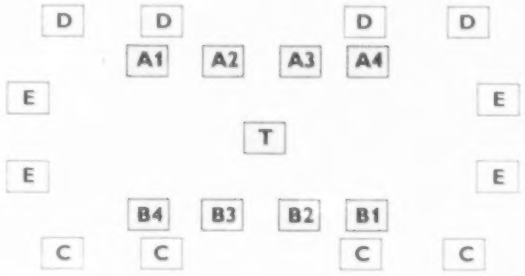

Figure 1. Seating arrangements

Task card for: Group A participants

Thank you very much for volunteering. Don't worry: although what happens in the activity may seem strange at first, I'm confident you will soon begin to enjoy the experience.

While you are waiting outside for five minutes, please discuss amongst yourselves what you think the potential benefits may be of being observed/observing.

Task card for: Group B participants

You will be allocated one of the four volunteer 'learners'. Observe **only** this person. In your opinion, what does this learner feel about this 'lesson'? What is this person's attitude to the teacher and fellow learners? Note down any gestures, facial expressions or body language which indicate to you this learner's attitude.

continued

Task card for: Group C participants

This 'lesson' will be in two parts.

During Part One - Look at this plan of the 'classroom'. Each box represents one 'learner'. Mark in the appropriate box each time the learner speaks. Label each utterance as follows:

T

N = Teacher asks this learner a question by name
E = Teacher elicits a response from the whole class and this learner speaks
I = Learner initiates i.e. speaks without being asked by teacher

At the end of the first part of the 'lesson', consider these questions.
- Which 'learner' participated most?
- Which type of utterance (N, E or I) was most common?

During Part Two - Learners will be working in pairs. Choose one pair and decide what percentage of pair talking time each learner is speaking

Learner 1 = ___ % of pair talking time
Learner 2 = ___ % of pair talking time

Task card for: Group D participants

Look at the teacher. Grade her on the following aspects of her teaching this lesson. (A=Excellent; E= Very weak)
1. Presence
2. Voice quality
3. Punctuality
4. Preparation
5. Balance and variety of activities
6. Use of visual aids
7. Classroom management
8. Checking of learning
9. Involvement of all learners
10. Achievement of objectives

Task card for: Group E participants

Take a blank sheet of paper. Draw a vertical line down the middle. In the first column note down anything that occurred in this lesson which you think is interesting. In the second column write comments about this occurrence.

- Ask the volunteers to return to the training room. Without any explanation, ask them to sit on the empty chairs centre stage. Immediately commence in role by saying, for example, *"Good Morning class. Now as you will remember last week we looked at the difference between the simple present and the present progressive. And today we are going to practise this...."* [On every occasion I have tried this, people slip into their role wonderfully, with no further setting or prompting needed.]

- Conduct the lesson.

[NB. I have tried a variety of English language activities to use in this 15 minute 'lesson', but the ones which have been most suitable combine clear and achievable language objectives (e.g. to practise the contrast between the use of simple present and present progressive) with a fairly difficult and intrinsically interesting game format which has the potential to intrigue (and occasionally confuse) adults who are native or near-native speakers. The volunteer learners should find the language easy (so they will not be exposed as deficient in front of their fellow participants) but they must find process elements challenging in order to replicate the conditions of a real classroom. See Appendix 1 for an example of an English language activity which you could use.]

- Clearly show that the 'lesson' has finished. Thank the 'learners' and tell them to relax. Then pair observers from Group B with their individual observees. Ask the observers first to report perceptions of their learner's feelings and attitude during the 'lesson'. Request that learners only comment when the observer has finished. Is the observer's interpretation correct?

- Meanwhile the other participants discuss in their groups the following questions:
  - What did each observer find? (Share figures, descriptions, interpretations or grades)
  - Did findings match those of other observers in your group?
  - In which ways did they differ?
  - What might be the reason for any differences?
  - Does it matter that there are differences?

- Distribute a summary sheet containing all five observation tasks to all participants, then conduct a whole group discussion on the outcome of their discussions. It is useful to first consult different sub-groups on certain questions e.g. To Group A: *Which of you participated the most?* before consulting Group C for their detailed analysis, thus comparing an impressionistic view from the person concerned.

- Finally, remix participants into four groups with representatives from all sub-groups. Ask them to complete the following table. (A completed example is given in Appendix 2).

Fig 2. Task analysis

Observ-ation Task	Focus: Teacher Learner Interactn	Aspect observed	Purpose Describe Interpret Evaluate	Comments (Is it workable? Is it reliable? Does it tell us anything? Who would find it useful in what setting? Why?)
A				
B				
C				
D				
E				
Teacher				

[NB It might seem curious to add sections for Group A ('learners') and Teacher (you, the trainer). However, I do this because I feel it is important to make participants aware of the fact that the learners and the teacher are, in many senses, the most reliable and telling observers of the teaching and learning process.]

The process of completing the table frequently generates further fruitful discussion about the Who? Why? What? and How? of observation, from very practical questions such as *Does it matter where an observer sits?* or *Is it unhelpful for an observer to become 'engaged' in a lesson?* to personal questions like *How does it feel to be observed without knowing what the purpose is?* and more searching professional issues such as *Is there such a thing as an objective response to a class? Do structured instruments help or hinder observation? Can an observer's descriptions of events encourage observees to interpret and evaluate their own teaching?*

Conclusion

I have found this brief interwoven sequence of activities an efficient way of raising awareness on a variety of observation issues in a short time. It can be adapted to suit novice or experienced observers from a variety of backgrounds. Although highly artificial in many ways, the sequence is based live interaction and as the 'learners' go through the complexities of the problem-solving game, it does in part replicate the experience of a language class. There are many built-in opportunities to compare and discuss responses and findings. The deliberately limited and flawed 'instruments' generate plenty of questions. It is immediate and multi-dimensional. In particular, it offers the chance to compare honest internal and external perceptions: something which is seldom possible with real classroom observation. It thus can help prepare the ground for future discussions on, for example, the role of feedback. (For an example of how one might develop the following session on feedback, see Appendix 3). Perhaps most importantly it is almost always perceived of as good fun and removes much of the stress normally associated with observation. I believe it helps predispose teachers to a more positive view of the observation process. In the final analysis, I suggest that the multi-dimensional theatre-in-the-round* can give more sensitive appreciation of the 'play' than a conventional one-dimensional view.

* The term 'theatre-in-the-round' refers to a particular way of presenting a play where, instead of performing on a stage set at one end of an auditorium, the actors are at its centre, surrounded on all sides by the audience. This is intended to generate greater immediacy and sense of involvement.

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For those who wish to read more about observation and develop their own tasks for Groups B,C and D, the following may be of interest.

Wajnryb, R. (1992) *Classroom Observation Tasks: A resource book for language teachers and trainers.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

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Woodward, T (1992) *Ways of Training* Harlow: Longman [Especially Chapter 5 Sections 1, 2, 3 on observation and Section 4 on feedback]

Appendix 1: Suggested Language Activity

[This activity was designed by Neville Britten at the British Council Language School, Madrid, Spain.]

The Time Machine

Objectives: By the end of the activity, learners will have identified the forms 'I can see/hear/smell/feel X ' and 'S/He is ____ing' and used both forms appropriately in context.

Aids: 5 prompt cards with a different famous event (+date) written on each.

[Suggested suitable internationally-known examples:

Christopher Columbus landing in West Indies (1492)
Amelia Earhart flying across the Atlantic single handed (1932)
The funeral of Mahatma Gandhi (1948)
The making of the film King Kong (1933)
Marie Curie winning the Nobel Prize for Physics (1903)

Teacher's Notes

1. Build up the scenario that you and the class are all travelling together in a Time Machine, a very old one, where none of the controls work properly.

2. Say that there is only one small window which only the 'driver' can see out of.

3. Pretend that you are travelling through time and suddenly stop. The 'year-o-meter' does not work. You - the driver - have to look out of the window and describe the scene to the class.

4. Tell the class they have two tasks:
   a) note down each time you say 'I can..verb..... X' and each time you she 'H/She is..verb....ing' or 'They are...verb....ing'.
   b) try to work out the event and therefore which year you have landed in.

5. Start to describe your scene:

> "..... I can see thousands of people. They're walking slowly behind something. I can't see what it is. I can hear crying and I can smell flowers and wood-smoke. Ah...now I can see what they're following. It's a large bed . Someone's lying on it..... People are wearing white clothes. The women are wearing saris....."

Start very cryptically but gradually make the information more and more explicit. Carry on until one of the class guesses the correct answer: 1947 - The Funeral of Mahatma Gandhi Show the class the card.

6. Go through the examples learners have written down. Elicit from them which type of verbs follow 'I can...' in the descriptions (ie. verbs associated with the five senses)

7. Divide the class into pairs. Give each learner a card and ask them to keep it hidden. Ask one learner to start their description for their partner. Monitor, help, give clues where necessary.

Appendix 2: Sample completed table

Observ-ation Task	Focus: • Teacher • Learner • Interactn	Aspect observed	Purpose • Describe • Interpret • Evaluate	Comments (Is it workable? Is it reliable? Does it tell us anything? Who would find it useful in what setting? Why?)
A	*Teacher and fellow learners*	*The experience of taking part in a 'lesson'*	*Interpret and Evaluate*	*We really feel that our views are crucial. We can give direct feedback on our motivation and enjoyment. We can indicate our response to the teaching and to our fellow learners. We can also show by the extent to which we fulfil learning objectives how successful the teaching was*
B	*One learner*	*Learner feelings/attitude*	*Describe and Interpret*	*Very interesting to find out how much you can tell from non-verbal indications. However, observers knew observees - this may influence reliability. Can be used by trainees in peer observation to develop awareness of learner needs.*
C	*Whole learner group*	*Learner verbal participation*	*Describe and Interpret*	*Very difficult to decide what constitutes an utterance; also what category of utterance eg T used eye-contact to nominate. Surprisingly low agreement among observers. Need more info on categories and more training. Can be used for research or to help trainees/teachers explore different modes of encouraging learner talk.*
D	*Teacher (and T-Learner inter-action)*	*Variety of teaching skills*	*Evaluate*	*Surprisingly high level of agreement between observers on what should be a very subjective thing. Couldn't complete all categories (no evidence here). Need descriptors for the categories and the grades. Best used only for Teaching Practice assessment by a supervisor. Definitely not for peers because potentially dangerous'*
E	*Depends on observer*	*Depends on observer*	*Depends on observer*	*Inexperienced Group Es thought they had the most difficult task. They didn't know what to look at and they started 'doing' the lesson instead. Some interesting insights from the more experienced observers. Can be used by more experienced observers for many different purposes because very flexible.*
Teacher	*Self and learners*	*Quality of learning and teaching*	*Interpret and evaluate*	*I found it difficult to be objective about the experience but I do feel that I was able to gauge quite a bit about how well the learners were responding to me personally and how well they were fulfilling the requirements of the game. I also often had very good reasons for doing what I did. Observers sometimes misinterpreted my actions.*

Appendix 3: Suggested follow-up session on giving feedback

For most observers - whether novice or more experienced - a key question is How does one give effective feedback? One of the ways in which I use the observation-in-the-round sequence as the springboard for discussions on this issue is as follows.

Trainer's Notes

- After completing the discussion of the content of the table, in your role of teacher, note down three points about your teaching and your students' learning during the observed lesson that you would like 'feedback' on.
- Sit in the centre of the room and explain your three points to the participants. They then discuss, in their original groups, the way in which their observation might shed light on your concerns and what could be a good way of offering the comments.
- Each group nominates one person to take part in the feedback session. Ask which group feels it can give appropriate constructive feedback based on its observation data and invite the nominee to sit at the front with you.
- Ask the rest of the group to note down examples of *descriptive*, *interpretive* and *evaluative* elements of the feedback.

A sample exchange might be:

Observer: You said you were worried that all learners did not understand your instructions.
Teacher: That's right.... I thought one or two did...but there were some disgruntled looks just before the start of the pair work and I thought they became a little disillusioned with the lesson at this point.
Observer: Well...in our group E we observed all the learners and one of them was fidgeting at the beginning of the pair work. But we followed this through and this person performed the task extremely well.
Teacher: Yes...but it's pretty bad if I can't get them to enjoy a game like this...I
Observer: I think it's more important for them to learn than to enjoy themselves.

- At the end of the exchange, discuss the nature of the feedback (in the sample, the teacher's comments are mainly evaluative, while the observer's comments start as interpretive and move to evaluative). Then set thinking questions such as:
- *Who set the agenda for the feedback?*
- *When might it be better to ask the observer instead of the teacher to identify concerns?*
- *Would it have been more effective if the observer had made more descriptive comments?*
- *Could the observer have framed any points as questions instead of statements?*
- *Is talking the best way to work in feedback?*

Constructing pyramids:

a 3-D metaphor for language teacher trainers

Jeremy Parrott - Assistant Director of CETT, Szeged, Hungary.

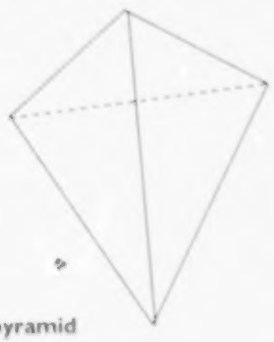
How do trainees acquire teacherly skills during initial training programmes? How do they learn to reflect on their practice? How do they synthesize the elements of a training programme to construct a personal model of teaching and themselves as teachers? The following practical activity can make no claim to answer all these questions but may serve, however, to raise awareness about them in novice trainees, and provide an unusual starting point for designing a language teacher training programme.

Materials

- **Several pairs of scissors**
- **Similar number of glue sticks**
- **Equilateral triangles made of thin card, sides 10cm., 1 for each pair in group**
- **Quantity of plain A4 paper or thin card**
- **Pencils**
- **Completed pyramid, as model for the class**

Procedure

Explain to the group that they are going to carry out a practical task which they may find useful when thinking about teaching and learning. Get them to form pairs ready to undertake the task. An odd trainee can either do the task alone or act as an observer of one or more pairs while the task is being completed. Distribute scissors and glue around the room. Give each pair a sheet of A4, a pencil and a card triangle. Hold up the model pyramid and tell them that their task is to make a figure just like the model using the available materials. Set a time limit of either 10 or 15 minutes (more time is needed for a larger group as a queue may develop for the use of scissors and glue).



The model pyramid

The trainer's role during the task is to monitor the processes which different pairs go through, but not to give any advice on how to complete the task. In my experience, a

continued

wide range of approaches is likely to be taken. Some trainees either know, or think they know how to make the pyramid, and start drawing straight away, usually explaining what they are doing to their partner as they go along. Some discuss first, either trying to conceptualize the task or to allocate roles. Some insist on handling the model pyramid, counting the facets, inspecting the joins. Some engage in tentative trial and error on the sheet of paper; very often a successful plan emerges at the second or third attempt. Others look around the room, either expecting the trainer to provide the solution or to get tips from pairs who have set to work quicker. A discussion of the various approaches observed can act as an introduction to the topic of learning styles.

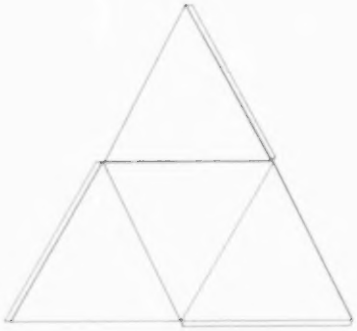
After 10 or 15 minutes of frenetic activity most pairs are likely to have produced a reasonable likeness of the model pyramid. Even those who have not finished are generally well on the way and can complete during the next phase - feedback on the process.

Feedback on the Process

It is worthwhile discussing at this stage how the various pairs arrived at their results, the role allocation, the dead ends, the formulation of new hypotheses. There are basically two equally good ways of making the pyramid, the plans for which are given below.

1.

2.



Abandoned plans are likely to include individually cut out triangles, figures assumed to have five facets rather than four and neatly cut out designs that overlooked the necessity for flaps. With non-native-speaker trainees some 'technical' vocabulary, which may be new - 'facet', 'flap', 'crease', 'join' etc. - will naturally come up here, and it may prove interesting to discuss both the languages used (L1 or TL) and the communicative strategies used within and between pairs. At this stage it might be profitable to ask the trainees about the learning process they were involved in and to consider how different their learning would have been if the trainer had simply shown them what to do. In terms of process therefore, this task can be seen as a practical introduction to experiential or discovery learning.

From Product to Metaphor

Thus far I have referred to the three-dimensional figure simply as a pyramid. To be more precise it is a regular tetrahedron, whose properties repay a little attention. It has, of course, four facets, each of which is identical and each side of which is also identical, as are all the internal angles. It is, in its unassuming way, perfect, and may be considered as the simplest of all solid geometric figures; the simplest 2-D figure being a triangle and a minimum of four triangles being required to form a solid - our regular tetrahedron.

Now it's time to start building up an image to relate this figure to the business of language teaching. Let's say that the tetrahedron as a whole is a symbol for the language classroom.

If we accept this, then what might the four facets represent as essential components of that environment? With a little prompting I usually find that trainees come up with the following four components:

- **Teacher**
- **Learners**
- **Method**
- **Materials**

I suggest that trainees should label the four facets of their pyramids with these components. Sometimes the term 'Communication' is raised as one of the essential components. I choose to think of it rather as something created by interaction between the facets, occuring in the internal space of the pyramid, within or across the classroom. By shading or outlining each facet in a different colour it's easy to show that every facet touches every other one. Therefore each one of these basic components is intimately linked to all the others and the language classroom is dependent on the interaction of all four components in order for it to function.

Just as the pyramid can stand equally well on any of its four facets so any of the four components can be used as a basis for language teaching. With the 'Teacher' facet as the base we have a teacher-centred classroom; similarly, the 'Learners' facet as the base indicates learner-centredness. Teachers with strong beliefs about particular methods may base their teaching on a given approach (the Silent Way or TPR for example). Materials are often used as the basis for teaching, whether it be a favourite course-book, exam preparation or a new activity picked up from a colleague or at a conference. It is important to realize that the basis or focus of teaching changes not only from lesson to lesson but probably several times within the course of one lesson. Whichever of the facets functions as the base, the other three still come into play, creating the solid shape and leading up to the highest point, the apex of the pyramid. In my 3-D metaphor the

apex represents the goal of language teaching, or indeed of any teaching - that goal being quite simply Learning.

Concluding Remarks

The model and the metaphor are now complete. Hopefully, however, the activity has initiated a learning cycle which will allow trainees to adapt and generalize from the specific task, enabling them to reflect on and perhaps reconceptualize their roles and goals as intending teachers. With one group of initial trainees I have used the key terms: Teacher, Learners, Methods, Materials, Communication and Learning as the macro-organizers for a 60-hour introductory course in TEFL. This certainly makes a change from a steady plod through the usual topics on a methodology syllabus and, even if much of the same ground is still covered, the ground is mapped out differently and indeed, in not just two but three dimensions, with the pyramid ever at hand as a reminder that teaching and learning processes are multi-faceted, inter-related and irreducible to one- or even two-dimensional solutions.

Would you like to send something in to "The Teacher Trainer"?

"The Teacher Trainer" is designed to be a forum for trainers, teachers and trainees all over the world. If you'd like to send in a letter, a comment, a cartoon, a taped conversation or an article sharing information, ideas or opinions we'll be very happy to receive it. If you would like to send us an article, please try to write it in an accessible non-academic style. Lengths should normally be 800 – 4,000 words. Send your first draft typed in double spacing with broad margins. Your article will be acknowledged by pro-forma letter. Once you have had comments back later and have finalised your draft in negotiation with the editor, we will ask you to send us three hard (paper) copies and if at all possible a floppy disk (micro 3½" or 9cm). **Your article needs to be saved on the disk as a Microsoft Word 6 or ASCII file**. Keep your headings and sub-headings in upper and lower case throughout. Finally, please give an accurate word count. We try to publish your article within about five issues, but if it is an awkward length it may be longer. It will be assumed that your article has not been published before nor is being considered by another publication.

We look forward to reading your article!

PEOPLE WHO TRAIN PEOPLE

Rachel Bodle is a UK business consultant whose specialist areas include the facilitation of group problem solving – for which clients range from Rank Hovis to the National Health Service.

T: In our first conversation (see Vol.11 No.2) we talked about a static long-term staff. In our second (see Vol.12 No.1) we discussed a more transient staff. Today I'd like to describe a different problem.

R: OK, tell me about it.

T: Teachers in several organisations I know have a lot of observers coming in to check the quality of their work. They have validations done by the British Council and ARELS, FIRST and EQUALS, BASELT and other organisations. They also run certificate and diploma courses and mentor and apprenticeship schemes so the regular teachers on the staff feel as if everyone in the world can pop into their class, observe, apply grades and offer comments. In order to stave off feelings of being judged and found wanting, they would like to come up with their own ideas on what they think good quality teaching is. This way, they feel they will be more able to keep a quiet stable centre when outsiders pass comment. Do you know any ways of staff working on their **own** definitions of quality?

R: 'Quality' has become one of those much-overused words which has different connotations for different people, and your group of teachers would not be the first group I've come across who feel a need to define the term in their own context! I'm sure there would be tremendous benefits to them from articulating and comparing ideas around what 'good quality teaching' means. If managers and teachers both contributed to an explicit shared definition of their quality aims, this could provide inspiration and motivation for the whole organisation.

Your teachers' consideration of the meaning of quality in teaching should be wide-ranging. In getting beyond the bounds of initial thinking it can sometimes be helpful to recognise analogous situations in very different contexts. The tension in the organisations you know and described – external judgements being set against individual's sense of professional integrity – is familiar to me and is an acknowledged challenge in other professional personal-service organisations. This suggests that your teachers might find it useful to make comparisons between their own situation and that of doctors in hospitals, accountants or lawyers in practice, or even management consultants! (For an accessible discussion of the design and management challenges of effective professional service organisations, see chapter 10 of Henry Mintzberg's book: Structure in Fives, Prentice-Hall International Inc. ISBN 0-13-854191-4.)

It's likely that the definition of quality which emerges will cover a number of different aspects. One management consultancy I worked with defined **nine** dimensions of quality in its operations.

continued

TW: What were the 9 dimensions of quality that came up?

R: First of all and overall they decided they wanted to be a quality-driven organisation, one with a culture oriented to quality and with internal systems and processes which ensured that their quality goals were achieved. They then defined what that might mean in terms of -

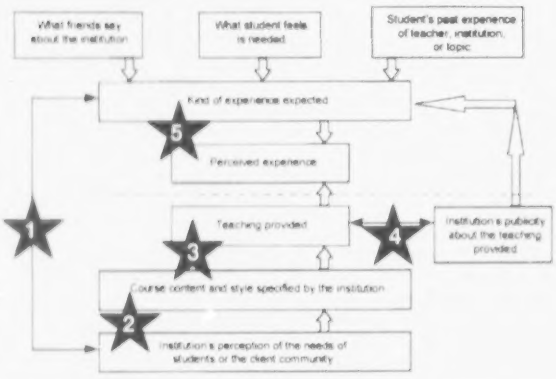
2. the types of people they would employ,
3. the way these people would behave,
4. how they would work together,
5. methodologies they would employ,
6. the systems and procedures they would use to manage their internal operations,
7. how they'd like clients to perceive the service they received,
8. the clients they'd like to work with, and
9. the future they shared a commitment to work towards.

I guess a number of these have direct parallels in teaching – though your teachers might have more of a problem deciding just who their clients/customers are?

Having defined the dimensions of good quality teaching, your teachers might wish to specify measures which would enable them to know how they (individually or collectively) were performing. For the management consultancy, quality behaviour amongst their people meant having people who were committed to using 'best-practice', to sustaining their own learning, building their skills, and enhancing their effectiveness. This orientation towards improvement is often an element of what we mean by 'quality' and it usually leads to a search for helpful feedback so that we can know how we're doing and, over time, assess the extent to which our improvement efforts are being successful. Your teachers might get some feedback by comparing their results with those of similar organisations elsewhere – but this approach is somewhat simplistic. A fuller picture might include feedback from students, local employers, or indeed from the myriad inspectors and assessors who visit the organisation. However, in this latter case it might be the teachers who proactively define questions for the assessors to answer according to their objectives for the development of quality in their organisation.

The process of seeking feedback is complicated. Teaching is not a straightforward product, but a service or process which will be differently experienced by different students. Moreover, the perception any individual student has of the 'quality' of the teaching they've received may change over time as they experience a need for their learning in different circumstances. In addition, a student's own perception might be different from that of their future employer who has different expectations of the benefits of specified courses. The assessment of quality in a service like teaching, rather than quality in a simple product, is therefore very difficult. Again, some useful insights might come through reference to work done outside the education field.

Meeting expectations - the gaps!


What friends say about the institution
What student feels is needed
Student's past experience of teacher, institution, or topic
Kind of experience expected
5
Perceived experience
1
Teaching provided
3
4
Institution's publicity about the teaching provided
Course content and style specified by the institution
2
Institution's perception of the needs of students or the client community

The diagram (a modified version of one in "A conceptual model of service quality and its implications for future research", by Parasuraman, Zeithaml & Berry, Jnl of Marketing, Fall 1985, Vol 49) illustrates how a student forms a perception of 'quality' based on a comparison between what they experienced, and what they expected.

TW: Looks interesting. Can you talk me through the diagram?

RB: OK

Different students taught the same course by the same teacher will make very different assessments if they have different expectations. Differences between expectations and the service delivered can reflect the existence of one or more gaps in the areas marked by stars in the diagram.

- The first gap (1) is between the kind of experience a potential student would expect and the institution's assessment of the training need.
- The second gap (2) can arise within the institution during the translation of this perceived training need into a course specification.
- The third gap (3) arises if there is a difference between the training as specified and the teaching actually provided.
- The fourth gap (4) represents the difference between the teaching provided and the pre-produced publicity material and its descriptions of what the course will comprise.
- The fifth gap (5), and the crucial quality measure from the student's perspective, is any difference between student's prior expectations and their perceived experience.

Teachers monitoring perceived quality of teaching by tracking this last measure over time can influence it by changing either the student's prior expectations (through open days, publicity material, etc) and/or by changing the teaching provided. This may, or may not, require a re-specification of the course, a reassessment of the training needs . . . back through the 'gaps' above.

TW: Thank you – so the task for those pursing 'quality' in education is not straightforward!

RB: Right! And made no easier by the multiple client group (each with their own expectations) which are served, and the rate at which needs in the community might be changing!

Reflecting on Training: The Experience of Three Italian Nationals

In recent years, an increasing number of trainers and educationalists, (e.g. Parrott and Ur) have come to the conclusion that it is necessary to rethink the content of training courses in an effort to overcome trainees' difficulties and meet their requirements and needs. This article outlines the experience of three Italian teachers who recently followed a training programme in the UK.

The British Council has been sponsoring an annual training course specifically aimed at Italian teachers of English for the past 22 years. The participants are selected by British Council representatives in Italy and they then spend a period of time in England, being trained. The course content, duration and the institution responsible for its organisation have changed over the years. Last summer, the 6-week course was characterised by two major changes in terms of the course structure and the course participants. The course was for the first time linked to a Masters Level Awards (MLA) Programme: the programme allows students to gain credits which can be either "cashed-in" for an award at Postgraduate Certificate and Diploma level or accumulated over a period of five years, leading to an MA degree. In addition, while in the past the course participants were all Italian teachers, last summer a group of teachers from other countries joined the Italian group for the first four weeks of the course.

One of the assignments the trainees were required to submit was an evaluative piece of work based on primary data from a personal diary they had kept during the course. Here are some considerations which emerged from the diaries of three Italian trainees.

Barbara Bettinelli

After teaching EFL for a considerable number of years, I was seconded to Loughborough University three years ago, where I have been working on my PhD. During this time I have tried to identify the needs and requirements of non native speaking teachers of English when attending in-service training courses. I have also tried to see if these requirements and needs are met by training courses run both in Italy and the UK. I started my secondment full of enthusiasm, with ideas I wished to explore, but after 3 years of solitary research I was feeling very isolated and I missed the daily contact with my colleagues back in Italy. When I was selected to follow the "a course of teacher trainer development" sponsored by the British Council I therefore felt very happy and I looked forward to what I anticipated would be a time of reflection and an opportunity to work with other Italian teachers.

When I think back to the time I spent on the course, I have clearly different feelings about my experience of being a trainee and my experience of working with my colleagues. The course components were interesting and relevant to my work, but I often felt that they were too theoretical while I really wanted to see "theory" turned into "practice". I enjoyed talking with teachers from other countries and comparing our different teaching situations: however, I felt that one of the very special features of the previous courses - trainees coming from the same country and taught by trainers familiar with their trainees' needs and education system- had sadly been lost. The new nature of the assessment procedure also meant that individual rather than group work was required: this was in contrast with the need felt by many of the trainees and myself to break the isolation which we often experience in our profession and to work on common projects. I appreciate that the course content and assessment had to satisfy the requirements of an MLA Programme, but I think that more attention could have been given to our needs as "learners".

The experience of working with other Italian teachers was challenging, enriching and a source of continuous motivation to progress in my personal development. The other 11 teachers came from various parts of Italy and had all been involved in teaching projects of various nature. I felt from the very beginning that we could have learnt a great deal from each other, simply by exchanging and sharing the experience that we all had gathered in so many years of teaching. We all felt the need to stop and think about our teaching practice, and to talk about the common problems that we have to face in our classes, day in day out. We treasured the opportunity to spend 6 weeks - all our summer holidays! - to explore issues which had become crucial in our teaching and find support in other teachers who shared the same teaching environment. In spite of the emphasis on individual work which the changed nature of the course assessment required, we all worked together and turned each individual assignment into an opportunity to discuss and compare our ideas. Although the emphasis of the course was more on "product" rather than "process", my colleagues constantly reminded me to keep focused on the process I was undergoing rather than the product I was supposed to deliver. They proved that "caring and sharing" works effectively. This is something which I feel is invaluable and which I am ready to pass on to both students and trainees I will work with in the future.

continued →

Giovanni Monticolo

I have been teaching ESP for many years in a technical school in the south of Italy where I have also been involved in the organisation of training courses for ESP teachers. A large number of students attending this type of school experience problems in understanding and writing technical language both in their mother tongue and in the two foreign languages they study (English and French). Along with other colleagues of technical and scientific subjects, I have carried out small scale research in order to identify the students' problems. The data gathered through the research was then to be used in planning a common language policy aimed at developing reading and writing as cross-curricular skills. I applied for the British Council Bursary for two main reasons: I wanted to acquire greater knowledge of the techniques and principles involved in the organisation and running of in-service courses. I also wanted to deepen my knowledge on how to conduct classroom research.

During the whole course I experienced a mixture of negative and positive feelings. I felt disappointed because I could not see how my expectations could be reconciled with what I was required to do on the course. One of the aims of the MLA programme was to enable participants to relate reading and theory to their own experience. This was only partially achieved by the course. Most of the sessions were too theoretical and I felt there was a big gap between the ideal conditions outlined in them and my daily classroom work. Some sessions were based on experiential learning while others were primarily lectures. I enjoyed most the first type of lessons: "doing things" gave me the opportunity to reflect on my teaching practice and compare it with my colleagues'. It was then that I felt that theory turned into practice as well as emerging from practice.

My colleagues were the most important resource of the course. No one was competitive and we co-operated closely in working out the outlines of the individual assignments required by the MLA programme in a free and creative way. This was very important because as a teacher I have to face new and demanding situations every day and, while I cannot rely on pre-defined models and "recipes", I can work with my colleagues to find appropriate solutions. During the course we worked on hypothetical Action Research projects, thus broadening my knowledge of the principles and techniques which underline similar projects. I believe that Action Research is a very useful tool for my professional development: it helps me reflect on my teaching practice, it encourages teacher co-operation in solving problems and improving learning and teaching effectiveness. Working so closely with my colleagues has certainly broadened my understanding of what happens in the EFL classroom and has provided me with a continuous stimulus for my professional development.

Rosario Tropea

I have worked as a teacher of Modern Foreign Languages (MFL) for the past ten years in a variety of Italian Secondary schools and I have also attended a number of teacher training courses both in Italy and abroad. I have therefore learnt that I have to be flexible and to adjust my teaching in order to respond effectively to the varying classroom environments. I saw the 6 week course for potential teacher trainers as a unique dpportunity to enrich my theoretical background as well as to study more closely various observation techniques. My main objective was to produce a working plan which could allow me to involve both the students and the teachers in the school where I work more actively. I felt that this could be achieved through sharing my years of teaching and teaching training with other strongly motivated colleagues. We could all reach a deeper awareness of how we work in class, become familiar with different learning and teaching styles and therefore plan a common strategy on which we could base our future work.

The most negative element of the course was the lack of clear information about the new type of assessment required by the MLA programme to which the teacher training course was for the first time linked. It soon became apparent that it would have been a difficult task, both for the trainers and the trainees, to reconcile the individual nature of the various assignments with the strong request expressed by all teachers to work co-operatively. We all felt strongly the need to work together towards a common project, for example to produce materials relevant to our specific professional context and which could be used, at a later stage, in our classrooms or in training events. This was partially achieved with the production of an INSET framework for the training of MFL teachers in Italy. The organisation of this INSET framework gave us the opportunity to establish ourselves as a working group and to build confidence and mutual trust. Later in the course, the need for co-operative efforts to produce feasible guidelines for our individual assignments resulted in formidable collaborative and non-competitive joint action within smaller groups which formed spontaneously. The systematic sharing of our experience has certainly made me more aware of the way we work in class and therefore of the role of teachers and learners: It is also gave all of us the opportunity to abandon what we often experience in our school environments, that is a "do-it-yourself" approach to teaching.

I was particularly impressed by the work carried out during the seminars on "Self-esteem", "Effective presentations" and "The reflective teacher". I found it very stimulating to engage in the concept that education is not just about the use and development of systematic activities and the learning of cognitive skills. Education is also about establishing a caring relationship with colleagues and students, raising awareness, enhancing self-esteem, feeling more confident to cope with inevitable stressful situations, and achieving personal and professional development. While most of the seminars gave me the possibility to reconsider my role as a teacher

and as a learner, the so-called "core components" of the course remained too theoretical: although, they proved very useful whenever they provided the rationale behind the activities we were required to carry out. Finally, the course gave me the opportunity to reconsider the enormous potentialities which come from the idea of observing and being observed in order to improve teaching practice.

Conclusions

In spite of the different background and working situations, we all shared some expectations at the beginning of the course. We wanted to see how theory can be effectively linked to our teaching practice. We also felt the need to break our isolation and share our experience with other colleagues: we wanted to work in groups on projects of various nature and wished to leave competitive individual activities at home We wanted to find solutions for our particular problems, going through a process of reflection and re-definition of our role as teachers. The course met our expectations only partially and we left feeling that this could have been determined by the fact that the training course and the MLA course seemed to have at times conflicting objectives. Waters (1988) believes that "teacher training courses have to be designed to meet their participants' needs not only as teachers, but also as learners". We agree with him: at all times we believe in a learner-centred approach to teaching, even when the learner is in fact the teacher.

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Redesigning The Language Awareness Component on Pre-Service T.E.F.L. Courses

By Andrew Foster and Paul Mercieca (St Mark's International College, Perth, Australia)

Introduction

On pre-service T.E.F.L. courses for those with native English speaker competence many trainers are well aware of the difficulties many trainees have in coming to terms with the Language Awareness component on the course. A major criterion for course candidacy is the ability to use the English language effectively. However, this does not mean that candidates enter a course with an explicit knowledge of how the Language works. In fact, this is also true of many trainees exiting courses. They are usually able to deal with small parts of the language, but are not aware of the bigger picture. All trainees leave courses with a basic range of teaching techniques, but their ability to impart learning is impaired by their diffidence with the language itself.

Our course is part time, over twelve weeks, the Language Awareness component taking fourteen hours and basically addressing traditional issues of Grammar, Structure and Function etc.. There appear to be two approaches to Language Awareness. One seeks to integrate "Grammar", "Vocabulary" and "Phonology" into Language Awareness (L.A.) as a whole, the other isolates them as separate components. However, these are merely issues of packaging. Whichever way they are timetabled it is important that the links between them are clearly articulated. On our course Phonology and Vocabulary are not treated as being separate concerns but do have their own dedicated sessions.

This article aims to detail the recent redesign of the L. A. component on R.S.A./U.C.L.E.S. C.E.L.T.A. (Royal Society of Arts/ University of Cambridge Local Examination Syndicate Certificate of English Language Teaching to Adults) courses at our centre.

Background

It is useful to consider briefly the wider context in which the changes we are making are taking place. Currently there is vigorous debate about the efficacy of teaching methodologies. Ellis (94) has comprehensively reviewed

continued

the state of research into second language acquisition and brought into question many underlying pedagogical assumptions. Instead of "language practice" we are given labels such as "consciousness raising" and/or "interpretation". The whole idea of "productive output" itself is considered questionable, although a case can be made for "pushed comprehensible output". The only safe assumption is that different learners learn in different ways at different stages in their development. In his teacher-friendly book Lewis (93) has brought the theoretical debate closer to earth, outlining a range of teacher strategies which stress the importance of grammar as a "receptive skill".

The debate in the pages of The Teacher Trainer between Grundy (95) and Kerr (95) highlights what appears to be a false dichotomy between form and meaning, grammar and pragmatics. The argument can largely be resolved by putting grammar firmly in its place, that is largely secondary to pragmatic considerations and possibly less crucial than vocabulary. However, grammar is an important "back-up disc" that must be retained by the learner as a tool and by the teacher as an essential part of his or her knowledge base. The crucial issue is what form this retention of grammar takes.

Ellis (94) discusses the"Selective Attention Hypothesis", which is that formal teaching does not enable learners to completely acquire what is taught when it is taught but provides them with tools which trigger their interlanguage restructuring. This is done by paying selective attention to form and form-meaning connections in the input. In other words atomistic attention to individual language items does not lead to either successful production or cumulative mastery, but a careful focus on key issues of grammatical structure can build a progressively stronger cognitive base for acquisition.

There is an important shift in emphasis involved here. Rather than possessing an exhaustive knowledge of the form-meaning attributes of a particular target language item on the day it is taught, although this is useful, the teacher needs to be even more thoroughly aware of the whole range of systems in operation. The role of the teacher is then not merely one of "transmitter", but also "knower". In other words, the teacher's awareness of language is not just demonstrated in "presentation" but also available as a feedback resource for learners, and in this way the traditional expectations of students can still be met.

If the teacher is to assist the learner in a different way by "knowing" grammar, how is the trainee teacher to come to "know" it? Much of the answer, we suspect, lies in treating grammar in a similar non-linear manner on pre-service courses, allowing a wider series of insights to develop. Batstone (94) has argued for a process as well as a product approach to grammar, using the powerful analogy of learning to drive a car to illustrate his point. In other words, learning how to master first the accelerator, then the brake and then the steering wheel would not result in successful, let alone safe, driving. In teaching terms this would mean focussing not only on "tightly controlled target language" (product) but also on helping students to use grammar as a resource which they can "exploit as they navigate their way through discourse" (process).

Changes to our C.E.L.T.A. Course

What do we expect trainee teachers to come out of the Language Awareness component with? The most important thing is the ability to analyse form, meaning and use and to have a good understanding of the problems that students might have in language processing. Surely another important thing to come out of such a component is an understanding of the underlying basic systems which make up the English language. On many courses, however, the overriding concern seems to be in familiarising trainees with a group of structures which they are likely to encounter. These structures still dominate course content and are often treated as product, despite the fact that there is no formal examination or requirement to regurgitate.

On most course trainees are given completed models of target language and supposed to memorise or familiarise themselves with them. Very little time is spent looking at the elements (syntax, morphology... please read on!) which make up those models and/or how those elements fit together. We decided that it would be useful to spend more time looking at the elements and allowing trainees to familiarise themselves with these, as well as the completed models. This, hopefully, means that when confronted with the complete models they are more easily able to break them down into their elements. Also, when confronted with the elements, they are more able to reassemble them into complete models. For example, in many course books "there is/there are" is treated as an accuracy issue rather than being an opportunity to notice how concord operates. This is not to suggest that lexemes should never go unanalysed, but that they may often provide opportunities to explore a generative systematic feature.

Where before most of our course was spent looking at the tenses, modals, verbs..., we decided to condense all of these and insert early in the course a session (2 hours) to look at a number of important dimensions of the language. In addition to this, we included another new session, towards the end of the course, which looked at other issues; such as clefting, passives ....

We also decided to draw trainees' attention to the way that frequently grammaticalised lexis shares a commonality of meaning. For example, the ing-form of verbs can be a verb, gerund or adjective but often denotes the same concept of temporariness and immediacy. This example highlights the fact that semantic concerns go beyond the verb phrase and also need exploring as vocabulary issues.

See below for the course timetable.

L.A.1	Introduction (Why is Language Analysis important?)	1hr
L.A.2	Constructing Messages (What is syntax, morphology, person, number...?)	2hrs
L.A.3	Structure/Function	1hr
L.A.4	Tense & Aspect 1 (Present & Past, Simple & Continuous)	1hr
L.A.5	Tense & Aspect 2 (Present & Past Perfect)	1hr
L.A.6	Review (of Tense & Aspect 1 & 2)	1hr
L.A.7	Modals, Conditionals & the Future (sic)	3hrs
L.A.8	Verbs & Meanings (Stative, Dynamic, Transitive, Intransitive	1hr
L.A.9	Structure of Information/Texts/Spoken & Written English	1hr
L.A.10	Review	2hrs

Quite clearly the verb phrase on our course is still important but is really only the main issue in L.A. 4 to 8. Also, it will be remembered that a lot of time is devoted to other parts of the sentence/utterance in the vocabulary sessions.

What is Grammar?

We feel that on many courses, trainees may reach the end still unclear about what constitutes "grammar". Frequently, they have gained the impression that it is a knowledge of the tenses. Unfortunately, this often carries over into trainees' initial teaching and they never become aware of the existence of other aspects of language.

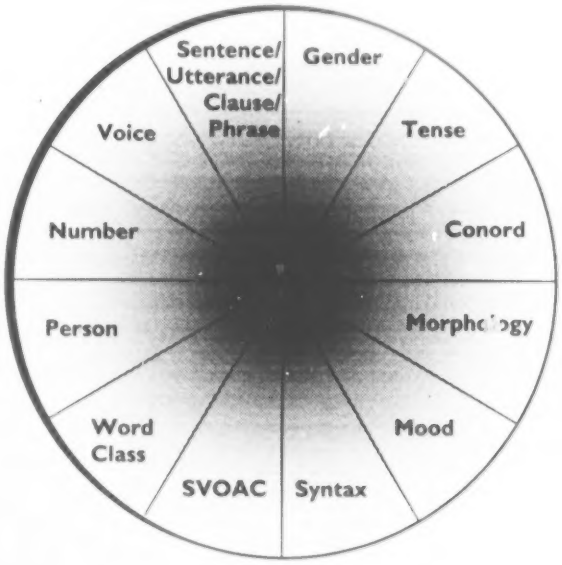
What is "grammar"? The Longman Dictionary of Applied Linguistics describes it as "a description of the structure of a language and the way in which linguistic units such as words and phrases are combined ...". The dictionary also suggests looking at Morphology and Syntax. Dotrainees understand these terms and how do you help them to understand them?

We decided that a useful approach was to make a list of the things which comprise "grammar" and go through them with trainees. It seemed important to allow trainees to see the connection between the different systems. A good way of achieving this seems to be to lay the whiteboard out as below, so that the whole patchwork can be seen and the connections between them made.

Sentence Utterance Clause Phrase	Subject Verb Object Adverbial Complement	Word Class	Voice	Person	Concord
Morphology	Syntax	Mood	Number	Gender	Tense

The chart is treated as an overview and trainees are encouraged to see that none of the boxes stands alone, that in fact, each one has bearing on others and that they are all dimensions of English.

Another, and perhaps clearer way to lay this out would be in the format of a pie chart as shown below.



In the initial part of Session 2 quite a lot of time is spent establishing what a sentence is and that it requires a finite verb. This leads into number person, gender and, hence, concord. A lot of the latter part of the session is spent dealing with auxiliary verbs and the way that they are integral to the language, ie the way they carry concord. The five uses of auxiliaries are detailed: voice, tense/aspect, negatives, questions and emphatic use. We also spend a good deal of time looking at the impact of morphology on meaning, showing the way that derivational rather than inflectional morphology may often be more communicatively useful to learners (without necessarily using this terminology).

Trainees are also encouraged during the session to think about their lessons and how this patchwork might help them to make decisions about how to treat language with different learners at different levels. It becomes clear to trainees that number and person can play quite a large part in making the language more or less complex for elementary learners. Equally it leads into writing sessions where trainees can consider the level of complexity they should expect from their students (from simple to compound to complex sentences).

Some trainers might argue that this patchwork is too complex for trainees and not related clearly enough to the classroom. We have found quite the opposite. Trainees appear better able to analyse language in general. They also seem to be able to make better choices about language in the classroom.

continued

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Quite clearly, looking at the idealised sentence is only part of the picture. Session three tackles the issue of utterance v sentence within the general context of looking at Structure and Function. As all C.E.L.T.A. tutors will be aware, Language Awareness involves more than just knowledge of components, it involves the ability to analyse salient features for students and all sessions are informed by a concern for pragmatics and appropriate classroom practice.

Part-Time Course / Full-Time Course

Some people might also argue that we have the luxury of a part-time course and the extra time that it provides. It certainly is a luxury. Trainees have the time to do a lot more **reading** and are encouraged to do this. They have a lot more time to allow the patchwork to coalesce. We would never suggest that trainees absorb all of this in one session - it takes time and requires recycling.

Could such a format work on a full-time course? We think that the length and number of the sessions is not problematic. If one accepts the premise that the idea of L.A. is to make trainees more able to analyse language for themselves, then a greater focus on meaning and use and the general principles of grammar is surely the best way to achieve this. We often talk about developing autonomy in our learners, should this not also be true of trainee teachers? It is also possible that tense and aspect analysis could be pared down even further and L.A. sessions be devoted more to Language Awareness for lesson planning, ie on an individual basis. However, we accept that the four weeks of a full-time course may not give trainees enough time to **absorb** the breadth of issues considered.

Conclusion

When we initially decided to redesign the course, the aim was not to make it more holistic and less atomistic. We feel this is a false dichotomy. The bigger and the smaller picture are both important and our aim has been to provide trainees with the tools to see both. Having trialed our redesign for three courses, we have come to the conclusion that it does give a much broader understanding to trainees and achieves a balance between analysis and synthesis.

For the moment, we feel encouraged by the results of redesigning our course and welcome comment from other trainers. The basis for our self satisfaction is only intuitive and anecdotal, and certainly not backed up by rigorous assessment and research. Accordingly, we would be extremely interested in hearing from schools who have explored similar concerns, particularly on full-time courses.

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LANGUAGE MATTERS

David Graddol lectures in the Centre for Language and Communications in the School of Education at the Open University. I first came across him as co-author of Describing Language. When I found he was presenting at International House (London) Teacher Training Conference in February 1998, I arranged to interview him. By this time he had become co-director of The English Company UK Ltd., the publisher of The Future of English. This book, commissioned by the British Council English 2000, is a guide to forecasting the popularity of the English language in the 21st century (see Publications Received, this issue). David wrote the book, drawing on the latest facts, figures and sources. It makes interesting reading for any ELT professional as it sets our own brief time into a broader historical perspective and its statistics, which are central to the book, are essential to us for three reasons:

(a) they correct the ones we think we know - e.g., we know we are in the middle of a population explosion. In fact, we are the middle of the rise in an S curve. This means that in a few years, world population may in fact be stable again, although at a much higher level than in our last period of stability.

(b) they give us the other side of statistics we do know - e.g., we know our own population is ageing, but teenage populations in other countries are rising fast. What languages will those teenagers be speaking and wanting to learn? How will this affect our business.

(c) they give us information we never knew - for example, in about ten years time, the number of people who speak English as a second language will exceed the number of native speakers.

Significantly, the statistics in this book are clearly discussed in terms of their possible implications. For example, we know that service industries are on the increase. What we may not have realised though is that this may well mean that more people will be involved in work that requires or involves talk. David Graddol and I took an hour away from the conference to have the following conversation.

TW: The Future of English is packed with interesting statistics and their implications. From this wealth of material, what would you want to pick out for our readers, who are mostly modern language teacher trainers?

DG: The main message is that the future is not as we perhaps thought it would be. For example, the role and position of native speakers and of British institutions in the TESOL business is not going to be as secure as we thought. We had thought with the global use of English, that this business had just fallen into our laps. We've been in the right place at the right time. We may be enjoying a particular phase at the moment but this could be transitional.

TW: Do you think, then, that another language is going to take over as the global lingua franca?

DG: No, I don't think so. But the English language is passing out of native speaker hands and into the hands of second language users, that is, people who've appropriated English

as an important native language of their own and who use it as a language of personal and social identity.

TW: So the first basic message for native English speakers and British institutions is that we mustn't be complacent. Knowing that, is there anything we should do to train teachers differently?

DG: Attitude shift is the first thing. We need to get a better understanding of our present, favourable but transitional position. Then we can plan further ahead. My research might help here. The Future of English is meant as the start of a debate on serious issues.

TW: What do you see as the main issues we should consider?

DG: The first issue is the rising status of non-native speakers. This is not just a matter of political correctness. Statistically, there has been a huge rise in the number of people speaking English as a second language. This also raises the question, "What is a non-native speaker?" It's proving to be an unsustainable category. A more important distinction that's emerging is the difference between bi- and multilingual speakers of English. An example here is a middle class person in Madras who speaks English as a first language, Tamil, Kannada, and maybe some other languages. That is, a native speaker of English who has multilingual competence. On the other hand, we have monolingual speakers of English. An example here is your normal British person who speaks no other language.

TW: So instead of worrying about native speakers versus non-native speakers, we need to be interested in multilingual competence versus monolingual competence.

DG: Yes. Even distinctions such as " first" and " second" language are now breaking down. For example, a person can use English as a second language at home, but then they go away to college, study in English, mix with other multilinguals, and use English with them for social purposes. In this way, English will slowly become an equal first language within the language career of one individual.

TW: So, you're saying that because the world is changing, our attitudes will have to change and soon our distinctions and terms will have to alter too. What do you feel is the next issue?

DG: I believe it's the breaking down of a model of a standard English. In the past, in Britain, people who spoke non-standard English were relegated to certain areas of the media. Their writing was tidied up by editors and so on. Nowadays, a much wider range of people have access to print. People are using their personal computers at home. There are fewer gate keeping sub-editors to screen their work. And then there's the Internet.

TW: One very interesting thing about e-mail I think is that it blurs the distinctions between what we formerly regarded as two distinct registers, spoken and written.

DG: Yes, so we are in a period of de-standardising what were native speaker models. It may turn out that ELT, rather than following old standards that have been set at a national level, will in future have a standardising function for English at the international level. Another trend is the fragmentation of English, with new standard varieties emerging all the time.

TW: Could you give me an example of that?

DG: Well, there are coursebooks that are made for local markets. Singapore English for example has its own dictionary which, first of all, means that there is now agreement on the spelling of Singapore English. It has an appendix too, of non-standard Singapore English. So a word like hawker, which means roughly ' a food hall vendor' will show up in the main dictionary: other words which will be heard frequently but not considered standard will be in the appendix.

Another issue is the emergence of ESL countries as sources of ELT goods and services. For example, the Malaysian government selling English language courses to Uzbekistan.

TW: So, the picture you are painting is that there have been enormous changes in the demographics, in technology, politics, economics and you are trying to encourage us to consider more ecological or structural thinking?

DG: Yes, if we think more systemically about the wider processes, we can understand the positions people find themselves in. According to chaos theory, or to complex system theory, change does not always come about because of huge causes. Major change can be triggered off by minor things. The business environment recently has undergone sudden shocks that illustrate this. If you take the beef industry, which was a very stable industry in this country, over centuries, the BSE crisis seriously damaged the whole industry in a few weeks.

TW: Just because of a few, apparently minor, decisions by civil servants!

DG: Yes. And a huge change in who uses English, how many other languages they speak, what varieties and standards of English there are, and who provides English related products, can come from gradual changes. A key word in the next century, in business, is going to be trust. This is what branding, or brand development, is all about. 'Brand' used to be about the identity and quality of a product. Now it's about the nature of trust in the organisation that is selling something to you. Building this trust is very difficult and has to be done on a wide ethical platform. If you take, for a moment, the metaphor of the brand, we could say that we have to reinvent Britain so that we are not stuck in the old 'beef eater tradition' brand. Britain is a vibrant, multicultural, multilingual culture. We have been suppressing this particular image. We should consider it a strength, a vital part of the British brand. It will give new worth to bilingual children, for example, those who speak Bengali and English. They could be an important resource, economically and culturally. In the future, business transactions will rely much more on multilingual activity and organisations will need to field multi-ethnic, multilingual teams. The days of middle- aged, white, male, monolingual businessmen throwing their weight around are completely over.

TW: Well, you started talking about a change in attitude. Sending multi-lingual teams abroad to market a multi-cultural brand of Britishness would certainly constitute a change!

DG: It might happen!

Wider exposure to classroom reality – the Reflective Seminar

by Regina Lo, Australia.

Introduction

Conventional teacher preparation programmes at universities and colleges usually consist of a period of exposure to learning theories in the training institutes and a period of on-site practicum in which student teachers are required to apply what they have learned on campus to a real classroom in school. The transfer from theory to practice is often a painful process for student teachers because they always feel that they are ill-equipped for the task. The theories seem to bear only little relevance to the harsh reality in the classroom since they are usually detached from realistic teaching contexts. Since each real lesson has its own unique features, what might be effective action to deal with problems in one lesson might not be appropriate in another. Hence, the teaching of more theories to student teachers does not inevitably produce more proficient teachers.

What student teachers need is wider exposure to different teaching contexts in which the knowledge of teaching can be applied. Johnson (1996) suggests that the use of cases and teachers' stories can place theories into contexts to enhance reflection and self-analysis in novice teachers. There are various other practices possible in a teacher education programme too to help students develop reflective thinking in an effort to improve their teaching. Journal writing, for example, has been recognised as a useful tool to raise the self-awareness of one's own teaching behaviour (Brock, et al., 1992). Tsang & Wong (1995) further note that student teachers can make use of journal writing as a means of communicating with the supervisor and seeking advice and suggestions. It seems that there are still not enough opportunities for student teachers to share their experience in teaching and collect feedback on their teaching performance.

In the ESL teacher education programme in my institution, practicum experience is carefully sequenced into three phases: campus-based Observation in Year One, school-based Internship in Year Two and school-based Practice Teaching in Year Three. In the Observation module, student teachers are taught various observation theories and techniques through viewing videos. During the Internship, student teachers spend two weeks in school as interns, observing a practising teacher at work and assuming partial teaching responsibilities. In Year Three, the student teachers spend three weeks in school handling lessons on their own. In both Internship and Practice Teaching, student teachers write journals to reflect on their teaching experience. I organised reflective seminars in the form of post-practicum discussion sessions to allow student teachers to discuss openly their practicum experience and seek solutions to their problems from a wider audience. This can prepare student teachers better for the Practice Teaching in the following year.

The Reflective Seminar

Each student teacher has to chair a session of about 30 minutes in their own tutorial group of about eight students. Thus we need two two-hour sessions to give time to eight students. In the seminar, the student teachers bring out the most difficult problem they encountered in the internship and discuss the solutions with their peer student teachers. The seminar was held as in the following example.

1. Presenting the context

Teresa taught a Form Two class of forty students aged about 14 in a co-educational English medium school in Hong Kong. The standard of English of the students was very low. Students could not comprehend fully instructions in English. There were occasional disciplinary problems. Teresa had to teach a comprehension lesson to the class according to the schedule given to her by the co-operating teacher.

It was an eighty-minute lesson. Teresa started by asking students to do silent reading. She intended to elicit answers from the students in order to check their comprehension. After this, she would go through the vocabulary with students. Then, there would be a discussion activity based on the comprehension passage.

2. Describing the problem

Not long after the students had started the silent reading, they began to talk with one another. They were not concentrated on the task. Later, when Teresa asked them the comprehension questions, they did not answer them well. In order to make them understand the passage better, Teresa spoke more slowly to explain the main ideas and used simpler English to do this. It seemed that students still did not understand the passage. Teresa used a little Cantonese (the mother tongue) to explain the lesson and also the vocabulary. She felt very frustrated because she did all the talking and it was a teacher-dominated lesson. She also thought that she was not an efficient teacher because she had to resort to the use of Cantonese.

Finally, there were only 15 minutes left to do the discussion activity. Teresa originally planned to use 30 minutes for the task. Despite the lack of time, Teresa proceeded onto the activity but it turned out to be chaos. Students took more than ten minutes to form groups. There was a lot of noise and students did not discuss the questions assigned to them. Teresa did not know how to handle this.

3. Group discussion

The group of student teachers suggested possible solutions to the problems outlined by Teresa, each solution leading to different outcomes. For the silent reading, they suggested that Teresa could start by giving clear instructions on what was expected of the students on completion of the reading. She could provide a few guiding questions, for example, to focus students' attention appropriately on the task.

Regarding the use of mother tongue to explain the lesson, student teachers seemed to arrive at the unanimous conclusion that it was appropriate for Teresa to do so because of the students' low proficiency in English. If she had insisted on using English, she would have made matters worse and the disciplinary problems would have been more serious, resulting in communication breakdown. The group did not seem to come up with any other effective strategies to deal with this problem.

As for the group discussion activity towards the end of the lesson, there were diversified suggestions on this. Some suggested that this activity should be cancelled if Teresa was running out of time. She could assign the task in the form of homework and spend the time instead consolidating students' comprehension of the passage and understanding of the vocabulary taught. Others doubted whether this kind of group activity was suitable for a class like this. They suggested that pair work, which involved less movement, might be more appropriate. Some student teachers focused on the importance of instructional strategies in conducting group activities.

As Teresa had encountered disciplinary problems when grouping students, some student teachers suggested that a fixed grouping could be set up at the beginning of term so as to minimize the confusion aroused in forming groups. They also discussed the grouping strategies I had covered in class. More confident students may be grouped with the less confident ones so that the former can help the latter. Likewise, talkative students may pair up with quieter ones.

4. Input from the supervisor

Sometimes, student teachers need reassurance from the supervisor in order to know whether they are on the right track or not. I generally agreed with their suggestions but pointed out that the use of mother tongue should be carefully handled. If student proficiency in English is low, it is appropriate to use their mother tongue to help them understand the lesson but, it should not be used as a panacea to solve the problems of language. Teachers should aim at reducing the use of mother tongue gradually as students progress. Teaching strategies to help reduce the use of mixed code in class may be a good area for me to give input on.

I also explained that Teresa need not feel frustrated about the lesson being teacher-dominated simply because she did most of the talking. To conduct a lesson, it was sometimes necessary for the teacher to provide formal input especially in the presentation stage. If the students were naughty or could not participate well in class, a teacher-dominated lesson was also acceptable. Furthermore, Teresa did adjust the speed of her speech and use simpler English to explain the passage to the students. She also switched to Cantonese to make students understand her better. These were all efforts made by her to be learner-centred in her teaching.

Conclusions

Reflective seminars of the kind discussed in this paper are a useful supplement to the often inadequate first-hand classroom experience available in an ordinary teacher preparation programme. It allows student teachers to re-examine teaching theories more closely in a realistic classroom situation where they can consider a variety of alternative strategies to deal with their difficulties in teaching, in a stress free environment. Discussion of real-life cases among student teachers encourages collaborative problem-solving. It also helps provoke critical reflection on their teaching.

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WHO READS THE TEACHER TRAINER?

Here is a sample list of subscribers:

Asoc. Bahieuse de Cultura Inglesa, Argentina

British Council Dhaka, Zagreb, Nicosia, Kyoto

British Consulate, Istanbul

Colegio Bolivar, Cali, Colombia

Danish National Library of Education, Copenhagen

Universities in Erlangen, Munich, Eichstatt, Munster, Germany

Language Schools in Wimbledon, Totnes, Cambridge, Oxford

Preservice Students, Hong Kong Institute of Education

Resource centres, University departments and individual trainers in Bucharest, Timisoara, Brad, Oradea, Resita, Craiova, and Arad, Romania

Teacher trainers in Mexico, New Zealand, Spain and Switzerland

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Action Plans - One Way of Ending a Teacher Training Course

Monika Gedicke, Germany

What I remember from various teacher training courses I have attended and what I have experienced with many teachers on the training courses I give are the different states of mind many teachers are in when they are about to leave a workshop, a one-day seminar or a two-week teacher training course. Some feel really enthusiastic about what they have learnt and with missionary zeal want to change or try out everything in their job at once; yet it is only too often that they find themselves discouraged again or 'eaten up' by everyday routine after the first couple of weeks. Others sense this kind of disillusionment beforehand, and at the end of their course, though being happy about all the new ideas and valuable experiences, they also feel tired, overstrained and not at all confident about really being able to apply what they have learnt in the realities of their everyday job.

There certainly are many further diverse feelings and reactions, but what both these extremes have taught me is that we need a practical and realistic frame of transition from intensive teacher training courses with their challenging and supportive environment to the routines and often rather stressful and competitive everyday realities in the specific job situations of each individual participant. One possibility I have found is setting up and later reporting back on individual action plans, an activity which combines the teachers' ongoing reflections on what happened during the course with actually implementing parts of what they have learnt and thus giving their experiences a long-term effect.

Session procedure on the last day of a course

(90 minutes to three hours)

Step 1. Lead-in: feelings about going back after the course

- "What I feel about going back after the course." The participants reflect on this sentence in 'two-minute-talks' in pairs or individually in a 'moving pen' activity (see comments below).
- Some of the feelings that were mentioned are shared with the whole group.
- The teacher trainer gives a short introduction to the idea of action plans as one possibility of keeping the experiences of the course alive beyond the time of the course itself.

Step 2. Mapping of what has been done

- The participants go through the notes they took during the course and write down two lists:

  "What have I learnt that is of relevance to my specific job?"

  "What areas do I want to do further work on (e.g.follow-up reading, discussion, classroom research etc.)?"
- (optional) The participants compare their lists in pairs or small groups.

Step 3. Setting up an individual action plan

- The teacher trainer gives an explanation of elements that make an action plan effective: e.g. being as precise as possible, being realistic with regard to specific personal and professional situations, including a clear element of time as well as a binding promise to report on the results either to colleagues or to the teacher trainer.
- The participants add a third question to their two lists (cf. step 2 above) - "When and how can I apply what I have learnt and work on what I want to find out more about?" - and thus individually draft some action points limited to 3-6 different fields that can be implemented in a certain time:

  I will definitely ... by ...
  ... ...
  ... ...

  I also hope to ... by ...
  ... ...
  ... ...

(example: "I will definitely try a role play in my class 10d by the end of November.")

- The participants decide on the follow-up steps to their action plan, i.e. a specific date about 3-6 months in the future when they promise to write a letter

  either to a colleague from the same course

  or to the teacher trainer.

  The participants are asked to include a copy of their original action plan in this letter and to explain which steps of their plan they were or were not able to achieve and why.

Step 4. Transfer to the classroom (optional)

- The participants devise similar activities for their classrooms, e.g. how their language students can write action plans with regard to their personal language improvement. It can also be discussed in how far these plans as one tool of learner training can help the students to organize their learning throughout a term or school year and also to get prepared for specific class tests or exams.

Comments

Step 1:

The 'two-minute-talk' is done in pairs: 'A' talks for two minutes without interruption and 'B' listens, then 'B' talks and 'A' listens; the speakers just express what comes to their minds not worrying about structure or mistakes. In the 'moving pen' activity the participants individually write for about 5 minutes without interruption and jot down whatever comes to their minds again not worrying about structure, mistakes or anything of the kind. Since this lead-in is meant to evoke the kinds of feelings outlined at the beginning of this article I think it is important to offer the participants a choice between oral and written channels according to what they personally feel most comfortable with. In many training situations I have felt that sharing these feelings led to a sense of solidarity and readiness to try the arduous task of writing an action plan.

Step 2:

Depending on the time you have for a session like this the participants either make extensive lists here or you give them a limited time as a starting point only and then ask them to extend these lists going through all their notes again at home. A further alternative is to ask them to prepare these two lists before they come to this session on action plans. This 'homework' could also be combined with a further 'mapping' task, such as "Note down any questions that arise while you are going through your notes." There then could be an extra slot in the action plan session to deal with these questions offering further clarification or giving hints for further background reading.

Step 3:

Being precise and being realistic are two very important aspects here. Otherwise the whole activity can turn into a demotivating experience. Some teachers in my sessions felt rather tense, finding it very difficult to choose three or six items from the amount of things they had done. I encouraged them to try with easy aspects, such as contacting people from the course or going through their notes again. Their faces brightened and the idea of finding a 'modest' starting point first and then maybe moving off to larger 'projects' in the future was a welcome relief.

Choosing a colleague for the follow-up stage works well with people who have made friends on their course. Whoever the letter is going to be written to, it can be very helpful to promise an answer - yet terribly demotivating when you do not keep this promise.

In shorter workshops steps 2 and 3 can be combined: the participants get a short time to mentally 'map' what has been done and then in turn they finish one sentence, e.g. "One thing I will definitely try in my classes is ... because ...".

Another option I tried with groups of teachers I regularly meet for a one-day training course two or three times a year is that they set up their plans, and when we meet again we take some time at the beginning of the course to report on our results. Thus we have an intense revision stage at the same time, and newcomers get a vivid idea of what we have done so far.

Results

The reactions of many participants in sessions like these have shown me how necessary it is at the end of a training course or even a workshop not only to offer teachers an opportunity to digest what they have learnt, but also to help them leave with a feeling of confidence instead of having an oppressive load on their minds. Many of the teachers who attended extra sessions or workshops on action plans after some of my courses in Germany and also after two-week intensive courses at Pilgrims, Canterbury, came to the session feeling exhausted and rather tense, but then left the workshop with sentences like: "I feel much more energetic now", "First I couldn't decide whether to come here or to go shopping, but now I know this is exactly what I needed this afternoon", "I won't leave this course with a headache now", "I feel great knowing how I can start now", "Now I'm confident that I will achieve some steps at least".

In addition to this, comments or later letters and reports of participants of my courses have given me valuable feedback on how effective parts of my teacher training courses were, e.g. what could actually be implemented in various teaching situations and what kinds of problems teachers came across.

Thus participants' individual action plans can help them to actually apply what they have learnt and help me to reflect on and modify my teacher training.

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BOOK REVIEW

The Mainstream and the PPP Debate

A Course in Language Teaching Practice and Theory

Penny Ur 1996, Cambridge Teacher Training and Development series, 375 pp £12.60 ISBN 0-521-44994-4

This splendid book is presumably familiar by now to all readers of *The Teacher Trainer*. I have used it repeatedly over the last year and continue to find in it fresh sources of pleasure. Of the methodology books I know, it is, I think, the one that I have disagreed with least. It is remarkably compendious and delightfully direct, personal and candid: I have never met the author but (if the reader will allow me a trite-sounding observation) feel that, through reading Penny Ur's book, I know a lot about her qualities of humanity, professional commitment, good sense, and capacity for clarity and organisation.

Personal statements

What makes this book so personal is Ur's own answers to the frequent tasks, to be read after trainees/participants /readers have worked on the tasks themselves. These answers are modest and undogmatic, and add up to a statement of her beliefs about language learning and teaching, teachers' and pupils' roles, and professional ethics. Thus she states her belief that "organising language practice is the most important thing that the teacher does in the classroom" (p.21); prioritises her criteria for lesson evaluation (p.220); or writes, apropos the sequencing of language exposure, communicative tasks, analysis and practice (to which I will revert), "I do not think that the answer to this question is very important. Probably all these methods are practicable and may be effective" (p.98). This clarity and boldness of statement - with its direct address to the reader, frequent use of the First Person and occasional autobiographical snippets - make these "answer keys" to the tasks much more persuasive, much more authoritative, than would a more traditional exposition of the same points. We are, in fact, in the presence of a master teacher.

Enriched reflective model

But yet the training model adopted is that of "enriched reflection", in which direct experience by the participants is "enriched by external sources of input [that are] integrated into the trainees' own reflective cycle in order that effective learning may take place" (p.7). Ur states the functions of the trainer as being:

- to encourage trainees to articulate what they know and put forward new ideas of their own;
- to provide input him- or herself and make available further sources of relevant information;
- and, above all, to get trainees to acquire the habit of processing input from either source through using their own experience and critical faculty, so that they eventually feel personal 'ownership' of the resulting knowledge. (p.8)

... and, one may add, in using this book as a training manual, to select and sequence modules to match the participants' needs and the time available. For the book's construction ñ elegant and somewhat unconventional ñ allows great flexibility in use. Each of its 22 "modules" (freestanding chapters) is divided into between three and six "units", which may each take from half an hour to an hour and a half to do. Of the total of 105 of these training units, 61 are labelled core units and make up a foundation course of 60-80 class hours, whereas the whole book might require (on the basis of the timings given in the trainer's notes at the end) half as much again. A shorter foundation course taking 35 to 40 class hours would use only the core units from the first eleven modules, covering "the teaching process", the teaching of the different language levels, and the teaching of the basic skills. Later sections deal with course content, lesson planning and class management, categories and characteristics of learners and, finally, professional development. For in-service work, Ur suggests that a single module might constitute one day's work.

The modular option, with plenty of cross-references but no assumption of previous treatment of other modules, makes good sense. In any case the path one takes through a methodology coursebook is unlikely, I think ñ whether on a pre-service (P/S) or an in-service (I/S) course ñ to follow the author's layout. In P/S work, the trainer's approach may well be cyclical and is bound to reflect arrangements for teaching practice; I/S courses tend to be à la carte anyway.

The scope of the book, as I have said, is very wide. All readers will have their own ideas about topics deserving fuller treatment: mine would include the lexical system, functional teaching, extensive reading, and class management. But it is hard to see how the general coverage could be bettered.

Attitude formation and skill development

This is not to say that the book constitutes a complete P/S course. It is very much more about attitude formation than about the acquisition of micro-skills for the language class. And this, I take it, is the tendency in reflective approaches – to devote more time to the development of the participants' value systems than to the behavioural aspects of training – reflecting the view that attitude development

can be as important in P/S as in I/S training, especially for non-native language teachers, who have themselves learnt the language in a formal setting. This means that the P/S trainer using this book does, I think, need to add quite a lot of work on the nuts-and-bolts side.

Thus there are modules in which there is little or no reference to actual classroom procedures. The module on vocabulary, for example, lists presentation strategies (without details) but gives little or no guidance on re-use, notegiving or the treatment of lexical sets. In the grammar module too we have questions to ask of a grammar presentation and a taxonomy of practice types, but no examples of actual presentation and practice procedures.

It may be objected that hands-on training is the individual trainer's business anyway, not that of the author of a methodology coursebook. But what of the novice trainer? What of the teacher or trainee using the book for reference? Another possible objection is that it would be prescriptivist to descend into the transactional marketplace of actual classroom procedures, with mere laundry lists of behaviours, and would compromise the reflective process. But I see no reason why reflection should be limited to higher-order questions: it is equally useful to identify, evaluate, prioritise, select or sequence individual steps in a classroom procedure (as we have done for years), which is what most participants want to do, and what Ur no doubt provides for her own trainees. But the book seldom comes down to this level of practicality. For this reason I take with a pinch of salt Ur's point (p.7) about her sub-title being *Practice and Theory*, rather than the usual formulation *Theory and Practice*.

If this is a criticism – if one agrees that methodology books *should* discuss details of classroom procedure – then it applies not just to this book, but to all the other leaders in the field today. Ur's book surpasses its rivals in its personal flavour, its humanity and its good sense. Of these last qualities let me cite some of the instances that gave me particular pleasure:

- her dismissal of the debate about teacher training vs teacher education as labels for what we are doing, and her adoption throughout of *training* (p.3)
- the enriched reflective model, combining reflective tasks with input from trainer, from reading and from experience (p.7) (Could anyone write a book now that was not reflective? At least this variant legitimises trainer input. See Kerr's remarks about disappointing trainee expectations.)
- practical advice to the trainer, e.g. suggestions for avoiding premature access by participants to her own answers to tasks (p. xii)
- the inclusion of receptive practice ("awareness raising") along with productive practice (e.g. p.84)
- the concept of "engaging with the language", used for any learning activity based on actual bits of the foreign language
- remarks on motivating students through testing, but not overdoing it (p.37)
- giving feedback on students' written work (p.170)
- hidden messages – sexist, racist or other – in teaching material (p.194)

... and finally and most gratefully, what I take to be her relative indifference to the PPP debate, already alluded to.

Learning paradigms

One of the first things to strike the reader is the elegance and originality of some of the juxtapositions in the book's arrangement, e.g. the grouping together in Part IV (*Course content*) of modules on the syllabus, on materials and on topic content (including cultural content, literature and other content-based learning); or in Part VI (*Learner differences*) of modules on learner motivation, younger and older learners, and large heterogeneous classes. The most interesting combination for me was in Part I (*The teaching process*), with modules on presentation and explanation, practice activities, and tests. At first sight this looks like a variant on the PPP paradigm, with testing given the same sense it had in Brumfit's *test-teach-test*; but I found no suggestion of this in the text: "tests" here means tests.

In fact in the module on *Practice*, Ur quotes with approval a refinement of PPP, at least for those language activities that most closely resemble skilled behaviour - Johnson's skill-learning paradigm: *verbalisation – automatisation – autonomy*. But she stresses that learning may also "start at the automatisation and autonomy stages, in unstructured fluency practice". (p.20)

The subject of learning paradigms comes up again in Module 7 (*Topics, situations, notions, functions*), Unit 4, *Teaching chunks of language: from task to text*, and Unit 5, *Combining different kinds of language segments*. Ur treats the choice between Wilkins's analytic and synthetic approaches to a text as one possible part of the choice to be made between the primacy of task-driven language use or of language study. Her conclusion could not be less dogmatic:

> Probably all these methods are practicable and may be effective. Which one you choose will depend to some extent on your own preferences and those of your students; perhaps even more so, in practice, on the approach adopted by your coursebook. What is important is that the different language segments should be combined: that we should not lose sight of the importance of the communicative acts and overall interactive context of language use by over-stressing accurate pronunciation and grammar; and conversely, that we should not spend all our time on 'holistic' communication, neglecting useful intensive study of special language problems. (p.98)

Or again:

> Presentations may often not occur at the first stage of learning: they may be given after learners have already engaged with the language in question. (p.11)

We are a long way here from the tone of some of the denunciations of PPP that have thundered out in recent years, not least in the pages of this journal; but not so far away from Scrivener's view that the components of his ARC model can be combined in different sequences. ARC is criticised by Thornbury on the grounds that it is a descriptive framework, not a productive training model, and its categories insufficiently operationalised for use in lesson observation by P/S trainees. Thornbury argues for P/S trainees to be given alternative lesson scenarios for each type of lesson, some PPP-based and others perhaps reflecting other ARC combinations.

continued

Men of straw

Could it be that there we are already approaching a consensus view that we need to be flexible in our sequencing of accuracy and fluency work in any given language area? Is the only serious disagreement about how prescriptive to be on P/S courses?

What then are we to say of the thunderers?

> The PP model is discredited and reflects neither the nature of language nor the nature of learning. (Lewis, 1993)

Are they saying that when their students do finally come to practise something, models should *not* be provided? Clearly that would be nonsense. Practice – receptive as much as productive – implies an objective and the possibility of feedback, therefore a model. So I conclude that at the heart of every rival paradigm there nestles a tiny PPP. The anti-PPP argument has not been about this core of practice, but about the learning context into which it should be inserted. It has been about learners' felt needs, sensitisation, motivation – an attempt to create learning conditions in which even reluctant learners will learn.

But this had been taken on board by textbook writers before the debate took off.

> No language course these days offers an undiluted diet of the dry meaningless P-P-P structured lessons that so many commentators like to set up as a straw-man foe. (Hopkins, 1995)

(This recalls that other hardy perennial among straw-men – audiolingualism – kept in our repertoire, it would seem, just for the pleasure of knocking it down.)

Penny Ur's excellent methodology course leaves me with the feeling that the mainstream has had the last word on the PPP debate and that what we need to think about more is the issue raised by Kerr – the reconciliation of attitude formation and skill development in P/S training.

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PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED

Changing perspectives in teacher education Eds P. Medgyes & A. Melderez (1996) Heinemann ISBN 0-435-24185-0. The story of the Centre for ETT Budapest, an institution set up to provide thousands of English teachers fast, told by a dozen of the team who designed and implemented the programme. An interesting story for anyone setting up or managing a teacher education programme and considering effectiveness and change.

Tasks for teacher education by R. Tanner & C. Green (1998) Longman ISBN 0-582-31663-4. This book is intended for pre and in-service EFL teachers working in groups with a trainer on tasks, memories and reflection. Sixteen units include topics such as observation, language work, skills work, responding to language student work and planning lessons. A trainer's handbook accompanies the text. It looks lively and both trainer and trainee friendly.

Training teachers in practice by Michael Grenfell (1998) Multilingual Matters ISBN 1-85359-399-0. Five case stories of modern language teachers on a one year postgraduate training course in the UK form the core of this book. Around these are set interesting discussions of different modes of theorising and gaining practice. This leads to the drawing out of policy implications for teacher education.

A grammar course for TEFL Certificate by Tony Penston (1998) TP pubs. ISBN 0-9531323-00-7.Designed as a coursebook for native speaker, pre-service teacher trainees, the book names and briefly covers the form and use of the parts of language at sentence level found in many ELT coursebooks. There are no further reading references nor hints on how to do further research into language but there are stories, diagrams, and tasks with keys throughout as well as snippets from coursebooks. (See advert this issue)

Materials development in language teaching Ed Brian Tomlinson (1998) CUP ISBN 0-521-57419-6. The Materials Development Association founded in 1993 aims to bring together teachers, researchers, material writes and publishers to stimulate and support principled research, innovation and materials development for learners of second and foreign languages. This book contains chapters by contributors to past MATSDA conferences and covers data collection and materials development and the process of materials writing and evaluation. It is readable, practical and principled.

Planning classwork, a task based approach by Sheila Estaire & Javier Zanon (1994) Heinemann ISBN 0-435-28254-9. For those interested in adopting a task based approach in the secondary school classroom, this clear handbook offers ideas for planning, implementing and evaluating units of

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work as well as offering a rationale and further reading for the approach. Well-rounded and well ñwritten.

New ways in teaching listening Eds D.Nunan & L. Miler (1995) TESOL ISBN 0-93979105807. A collection of short, practical ideas from teachers all over the world and divided into six parts: listening for cognitive strategies, interlinked skills, pronunciation improvement, technology, academic purposes and affective aspects. The ideas are written up in recipe form and contain many old standards.

Language hungry! An introduction to language learning fun and self esteem by Tim Murphey (1998) Macmillan ISBN 4-89585-259-8. Twenty short chapters designed to help students get excited about learning. Written from a Japanese context, it would nevertheless make a great companion reader for students and teachers sharing class time together. Ideas include shadowing, reviewing, breaking rules, playing and juggling.

Motivating the difficult to teach by P. Galloway et al (1998) Longman ISBN 0-582-23155-8. This is not a recipe book to be picked up in a moment of crisis (nor thrown, since it's not thick!). Better, it's a thorough discussion of the different ways of naming, approaching, understanding, responding to and researching into the motivation of both those who are difficult to teach and those who teach them.

The skilled helper by Gerard Egan (1998) Brooks/Cole Pubs ISBN 0-534-34948-X. In its sixth edition, this classic from the world of counselling moves step by step through a practical, three stage model of problem management for counsellors and therapists. Teacher trainers are not counsellors or therapists. We do though spend time one-to-one and in groups working with teachers who want to get somewhere different. The shared realistic model in this book helps us to consider what helping is all about, whether helping helps and when and how to manage its good and shadow sides.

The future of English by David Graddol (1997) The British Council. ISBN 0-86355035607.Described as aibooki, this heavy magazine was commissioned by the British Council initiative English 2000 to facilitate informed debate about the future use and learning of the English language worldwide. For more information see Language Matters page this issue.

Technology in teaching and learning an introductory guide by Adam Warren et al (1998) Kogan Page ISBN 0-7494-25156. A reference book on personal computers, connecting to the internet, using e-mail, newsgroups, computer and video conferencing and using the worldwide web. There are short mentions of OHPs and other lecture presentation aids as they relate to computer generated material. If you don't know you OCR or ISP from your LCD or HTML, then this book will help.

The non- native teacher by Peter Medgyes (1994) Macmillan ISBN 0-333-60020-7. A thorough discussion of the position of the non- native speaker of English as teacher and teacher learner. An unusually thorough table of contents gives east access to a practical, humorous text. Recommended as a confidence booster to NNTs and as a smugness reducer to NTs.

Teaching multilevel classes in ESL by Jill Bell (1991) Pippin pubs, Ontario, Canada. ISBN 0-88751-0256 One of very few books designed to help teachers struggling with heterogeneous classes in adult education. The text is helpful, practical and uses real life examples throughout a discussion of planning, assessment. Class management, activity types and self-access material.

British cultural identities Eds M. Storry & P. Childs (1997) Routledge ISBN 0-415-13699-7. An analysis of contemporary British identity looking at ways in which people who live in the UK today position themselves and are positioned by their culture. Core chapters cover seven intersecting areas: place, education, work and leisure, gender, sex and the family, youth culture and age, class and politics, ethnicity and language, religion and heritage. Includes timelines, tables, photos and recent examples from books, films and TV programmes.

Effective language learning by Suzanne Graham (1997) Multilingual Matters ISBN 1-85359-379-6. This book looks at the learning processes of students of French and German as they begin learning at advanced level in secondary schools in the UK. In particular it concentrates on: learner perception of difficulty and strategies to overcome them, the relationship between the difficulties and strategies and factors such as gender, motivation and anxiety, teacher perception of student difficulty and the measures they take to ease transition into A-level language study. The overall aim is to help all learners (successful and unsuccessful) to reflect on their own learning behaviour and to become more proficient language learners.

Managing learning styles in the classroom by G.H.Diaz Maggioli (1995) TESOL's voices of experience series with accompanying audio cassette tape. Available from TESOL Inc. 1600 Cameron St. Suite 300 Alexandria, VA 22314-2751. USA. The materials in the series are the ultimate in teacher trainer session plans since once you have worked through the reading, listening and tasks yourself and understood all the material, you are then encouraged to use them with your own participants. This particular pack deals with learning styles, teaching styles and ways to minimise a clash between them. A novel concept in training materials.

The stress work book by E. Warren & C.Toll (1997) Nicholas Brealey pubs ISBN 1-85788-171-0. This book doesn't assume stress is negative but discusses ways of defining, distinguishing and working with understress, healthy stress and over stress and its affects on bodies, thoughts, feelings and actions whether it occurs in individuals, teams or whole organisations. Written in plain English with lots of bullet points, boxes and side titles.

Bullying in schools and what to do about it by Ken Rigby (1996) Jessica Kingsley pubs. ISBN 1-853025-455-4. Based on research in S. Australia that drew responses from 20,000 + school students, this book offers strategies for identifying bullies and victims, ways of defusing potentially troublesome situations, ways to enhance victim self esteem and methods of dealing with bullies.

New publication from Hungary

School experience, a new periodical is a forum for EFL teacher educators and is published by the British Council Budapest and local in-service teacher training, English and American studies departments. It aims to create an opportunity for EFL teacher educators in Hungary to share ideas and problems. Available via Caroline Bodoczky, Integnational Business School, Budapest, Tarogato u. 2-4, 021, Hungary. Also available via Caroline is information on the local teaching practice handbook and mentoring handbook for teachers and trainee teachers of English in Hungarian state schools.

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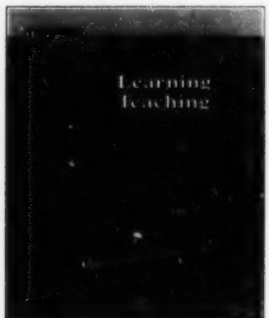

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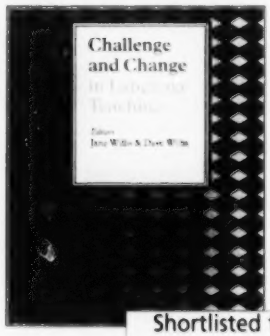

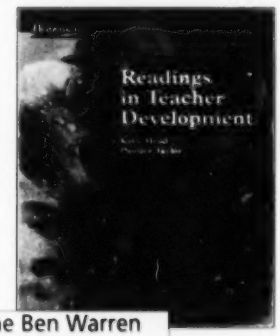

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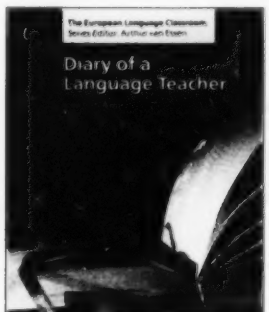

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Further Details
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Further details quoting ref: **TT98** from **The Graduate School. Tel: 0116 252 3675, fax: 0116 252 3653.**

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Further details quoting ref: **DLTT98** from **The Continuing Professional Development Office, tel: (0116) 252 5782 (24 hrs). Fax: (0116) 252 3653. email: hw8@le.ac.uk.**

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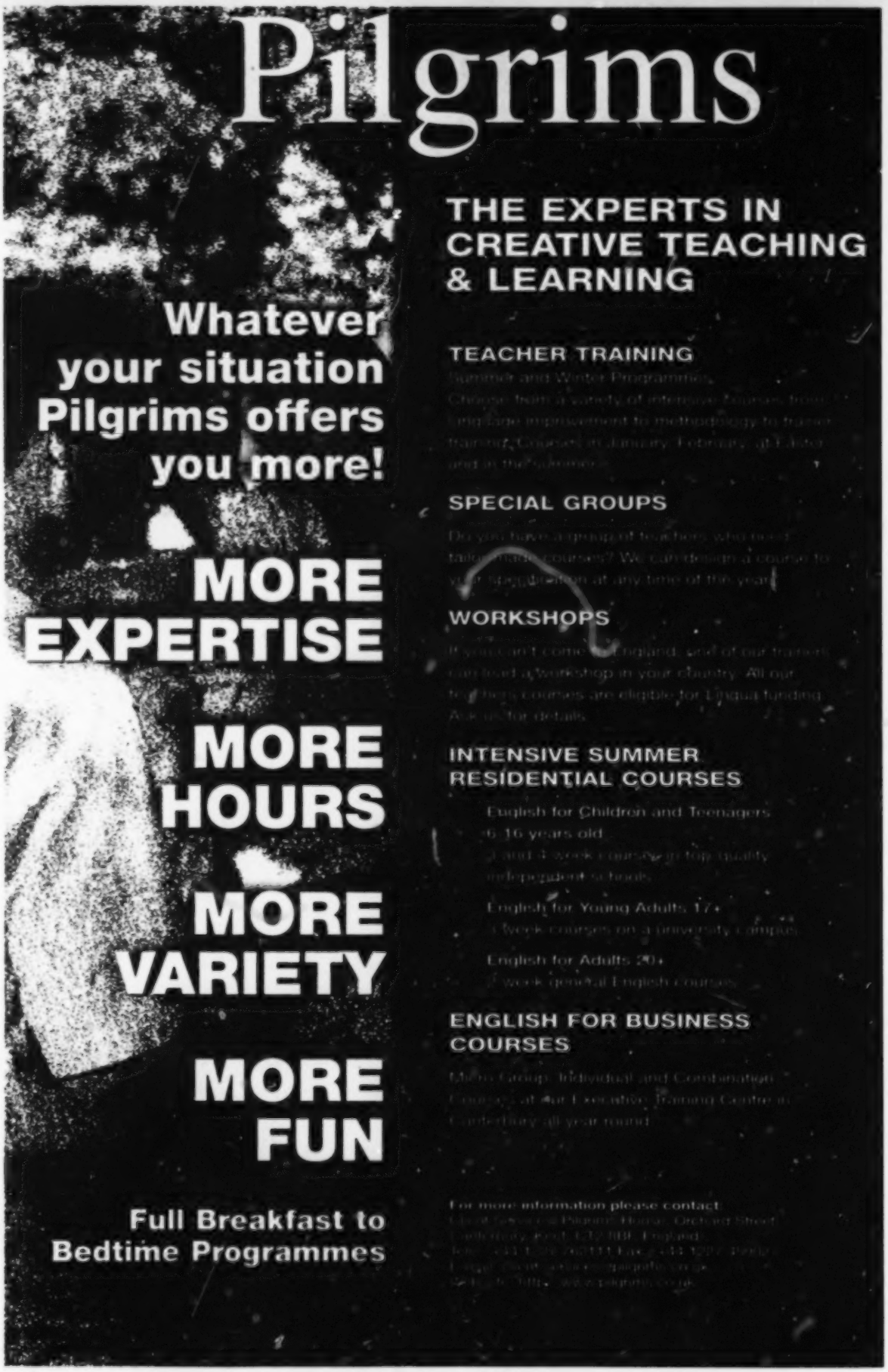

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